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*Jungle*  
*Pimpernel*



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*By the same Author*

*"High Lights and Flights in New Guinea"*

*The dramatic and stirring story of some  
of the wildest country on earth, and its  
exploration*





JEAN VICTOR DE BRUIJN,  
Captain, Netherlands East Indies Army (Bronze Cross and Cross of Merit),  
Doctor of Literature and Philosophy.

# *Jungle Pimpernel*

*The Story of a District Officer in  
Central Netherlands New Guinea*

*By  
Lloyd Rhys*



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*To*  
*Edgar James Preece*

***“Je Maintiendrai”***

**(I will maintain)**

*Motto of the House of Orange*

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## *Prologue*

ONE EVENING in August 1945, Jean Victor de Bruijn, aged thirty-one, Doctor of Literature and Philosophy, and Captain in Her Majesty's Netherlands East Indies Army (Bronze Cross and Cross of Merit), reclined in a comfortable chair in a room somewhere in Australia. His tunic had been discarded, and the shirt, opened at the collar, showed a slender neck tapering from bronzed shoulders to a finely placed head. The sensitive, slim, khaki-clad figure relaxed, and the lids closed over piercing brown eyes. He more resembled the student or poet than one who had faced the rigours of jungle life, had made hard decisions, and taken stern action. He was in a setting of books and maps mostly relevant to his experiences but for the time being forgotten. At that moment de Bruijn was back in his hut by Lake Paniai, in the central ranges of Netherlands New Guinea.

It was almost possible to imagine the scene changing as he talked—to see the backs of the books become strips of bark, the walls rough timber hewn from the jungle, the maps hanging pandanus leaves, the radiator an open fire on the earthen floor. A scuffle outside the door brought to his face the friendly smile one remembers so well—a smile perhaps of welcome, perhaps of recollection. It may have been his friend Soalekigi, the Migani chief, come from the village of Itodah to pay him a visit, or it may have been Thea, the favourite white pig, looking for her regular evening attention and some sweet potato. It may have been for any of the friends he had left behind and to whom he has a desperate longing to return to set up again a wise administration temporarily interrupted by the war. It was of these friends, whose life had been so closely bound with his in the events of five long years, he

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spoke so eagerly that words and names tumbled and jostled each other, conjuring up vivid scenes and making strange, living, stone-age people inhabit that room as could only be done by one who through enthusiasm for his work had come to know and love them. He saw them standing silent, tense, by the shores of the lake, as they had been before, watching for the plane to land on the water, waiting to hear his jungle call. He heard their cry echo through the mountain ranges—"The *Kontolulle* has come!"

## 1

*Jean Victor de Bruijn—Discovery of Wissel Lakes—Establishment of Enarotali—De Bruijn takes charge—Ekari people as he found them.*

JEAN VICTOR DE BRUIJN was a "Sunday child," and was born with a *helm*, or caul, over his head. Both these things were good omens. A Sunday child is supposed to be lucky, and amongst English people, to be born with a caul is also thought to bring good fortune and is supposed to be a preservative against drowning, but in the East Indies it is believed to give one the power to see into the future. So far neither advantage has been denied him.

The boy, one of a family of eight children, was born of Dutch parents, on the 25th November, 1913, at the sugar plantation at Mertojoedan, near Magelang, in Java. The father, Mynheer de Bruijn, was manager of the plantation.

The child received his early education at the primary school at Magelang, and after six years passed on to the secondary school at the northern coastal town of Semarang. From the Semarang school in 1931, he matriculated to the University at Leiden, where he took the course set down for those who wished to follow a career in the civil administrative service of the Netherlands East Indies. It was a five years' course, but knowing de Bruijn, it is not surprising to learn that he completed his studies in four years.

Until 1925 the University at Leiden had maintained a monopoly of training for the East Indies administrative service, but in that year a privately endowed Indological faculty was established at Utrecht University, and students could



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choose either place for study. During the years immediately preceding 1931, about seventy candidates were sent to the East Indies annually.

The year 1935 was a bad one. The cloud of depression lay heavy over the East Indies, and for the time being no further appointments were being made to the administrative service, so de Bruijn had to face two years in Holland on part salary but without occupation. After four years of study his natural inclination was to play, and for three months he did this as thoroughly as everything else he has undertaken. But leisure palled. "It is an awful thing," he said, "for a man not to have work," so he went to his professor and pleaded with him for something to do. "Give me some problem to study, something to occupy my time while I am waiting here." The subject was discussed and decided upon, and, eagerly, young de Bruijn set himself to the task. As a result he wrote his thesis *The Significance of the Painter, H. N. SIEBURGH, for the Hindu-Javanese Archæology* (*H. N. SIEBURGH en zijn beteekenis voor de Hindoe-Javaansche Oudheidkunde* Drukkerij, "Luctor et Emergo," Leiden, December 1937).

On the 10th December, 1937, at the age of twenty-four, de Bruijn emerged from Leiden with the degree of Doctor of Literature and Philosophy. One month later he went back to the East Indies, and from Batavia received his first appointment as Assistant District Officer at Saparoea, in the Molucca Islands. Very shortly he was transferred to Piroe, on the island of Ceram, where he remained for eight months during which period much valuable work was done in surveying and constructing roads to open up the country.

De Bruijn was anxious to go to Netherlands New Guinea. Even before leaving Holland he had applied for a position there. The recent discovery of the Wissel Lakes, in the interior of that little-known country, had made him all the more eager, but the authorities thought him to be far too young for the responsible nature of the work. Two or three years' ex-

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perience were deemed necessary before an officer could be considered capable of filling such a position, but unexpectedly, after only ten months in the service, de Bruijn had his opportunity. There can be little doubt that the Government realized his brilliance, his ability and tact, as well as his eagerness. In 1939 they sent him an urgent telegram to fly to Amboina, and from there proceed to take charge of the base at the newly found lakes. His chance had come.

It so happened that, one day in October 1936, Flying-Officer Naval Lieutenant-Commander F. J. Wissel, in the service of the Netherlands New Guinea Petroleum Company, made a survey flight from Seroei, on the island of Japan, north of Geelvink Bay, to Aika, east of Timoeika, on the southern coast of New Guinea. With him was Mynheer Haak, a civilian in the employ of K.N.I.L.M. While flying low over the central mountains between the two great coastal ranges north and south in Netherlands New Guinea, they noticed a glare in the valley, and Wissel dived his plane for a closer view. They were amazed to see a large expanse of water spread beneath them. The pilot turned his plane and dived again, this time flying very low over a large lake. They did not know what consternation they caused. There were several native canoes on the lake, and Wissel and Haak were surprised to see the people jump overboard and swim for the shore. The plane's aerial had become detached, and with a piece of copper at the end of it was swinging dangerously low over the water. This was too much for the fishermen, who, in any event, had never even seen a plane before. It so happened, too, that the Papuans in their village by the shore were in the midst of holding a pig feast. Three years later they told de Bruijn they had been so terrified when the plane flew over that they thought some awful thing was about to happen to them, and in their fright they abandoned the feast, threw the pigs into the lake, and ran into the jungle. The two men in the plane of course knew nothing of this: they were much

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more interested in their discovery. Soon they saw, a little to the south of the lake, and so close as to be almost linked up with it, another, though smaller, lake. Farther south again was something they could not quite discern: it might have been water or it might have been cloud. Haak made a rough sketch of the area in which he showed two lakes, and beneath the southern one he put a question mark. This map was embodied in the report, for the lakes had never before been seen by white man, and, as was ascertained later, even the Papuans of the coastal area did not know of their existence.

All this vast region of Netherlands New Guinea and the numerous surrounding islands came under the government of "the Great East," with a governor residing at Macassar, in the Celebes. "The Great East" was divided into four residencies each directed by a Resident Magistrate. Divisions of these residencies were formed, each of which was controlled by an Assistant Resident Magistrate, and these divisions were again split up into subdivisions, each in charge of a *Controleur*, or District Officer. Still smaller districts came under a *Bestuursassistent*, who was responsible to his *Controleur*.

The newly found Wissel Lakes region was under the administration of Resident Magistrate H. J. Janssen, then at Amboina, whose powers were delegated to the Assistant Resident Magistrate, Dr. Cator, at Fak Fak. It has been said that "Assistant Residents were aided by *Controleurs* who, theoretically, had no independent sphere of action; they were supposed merely to collect information and to execute the orders of their superiors." This was so in Java, but in the outer regions of the East Indies the *Controleurs*, by their daily close association with the people, had a far more intimate knowledge of them than had any of their superior officers and, because of their isolation, often had to take prompt and decisive action without reference to higher authorities. In Java the *Controleur* has no independent dis-

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trict, whereas in the outer regions he has sole charge of his subdivision.

The Resident Magistrate at Amboina, on receipt of Haak's report, decided to make a centre at the Wissel Lakes (so named after Flying-Officer Naval Lieutenant-Commander Wissel), from which expeditions could be made farther inland to the still unknown regions to the east. The new Wissel Lakes area became a part of the division under Assistant Resident Magistrate Dr. Cator at Fak Fak, on the south-west coast.

Dr. Cator's first duty was to arrange an expedition. In order to do this he made a survey flight by seaplane, and in September 1937 landed on the largest and most northern of the lakes. In flying over he discovered that the unidentified object marked by Wissel on his sketch map with a question mark was indeed a third lake. The three lakes, it was learned, bore the Papuan names of Paniai, Tage, and Tigi, from north to south, respectively.

One month later Cator took an overland compass course from the coastal village of Oeta, and arrived at Bivouac 18, a village called Bedoboboetoe, on the eastern side of the Jawe River, and a little south of Lake Tigi, the most southern of the three lakes. He was prevented from going farther because a number of his carriers had deserted, and, being unable to obtain others in this sparsely populated region, was forced to abandon the project and return.

This approach from the coast was the course followed in later years for bringing supplies into the mountains. It was the most direct as well as being the easiest overland route. Oeta lies to the west of Timoeke, by the mouth of the Orawja River. For some distance the river is navigable, and supplies are transported as far as possible by canoe, or sometimes by an outboard motor-boat, after which they have to be carried over the mountain trail. Dr. de Bruijn later made an expedition along this overland route and also tried to find an easier

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way. Both these expeditions are described, as they appear in the sequence of his adventures.

In November 1937 Dr. Cator again made a survey flight in preparation for another overland trip, which he actually accomplished in the following month, using the trail from Oeta via Itodah to the west of the Jawe River. Itodah lies about one and a half days' walking distance over marshy ground and wooded mountains to the south-west of Lake Tigi, the southernmost of the three Wissel Lakes.

On that journey Cator's guide was Soalekigi, chief of the village of Itodah, of the Migani tribe. Before leading the party to the lakes, the old chief took them across the Jawe River to the eastern Migani village of Koegapa. He was anxious that the newcomers should learn about both these Migani settlements before they went on to the lakes, which are situated in the territory of another tribe, that of the Ekari people. Thus in crossing the Jawe, going from one village to the other, Cator passed within a mile or so of his destination without being aware of it. Perhaps this was natural jealousy on the part of the Migani Chief, who was very conscious of the importance of the occasion.

No further expedition was made into this locality until May 1938, when Commissioner of Police J. P. K. van Eechoud,<sup>1</sup> used the Orawja trail from the coast with about forty carriers, leaving another 380 carriers to follow with supplies from Oeta. Of these about 365 deserted. They were all coastal people, unaccustomed to the mountains and the cold climate. However, new recruits were subsequently found to carry the supplies. In the meantime van Eechoud had pushed ahead with his forty men, and eventually arrived at Lake Paniai, where, at Enarotali, he established the first Dutch administration outpost in the central mountains of Netherlands New Guinea. As its first administrator he

<sup>1</sup> Now Lieut.-Col. van Eechoud, Resident Magistrate of Netherlands New Guinea.

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remained there until November of that year.

At the end of this period van Eechoud was relieved by District Officer Dr. Stutterheim, and returned to the north coast, thus making the first overland trip from the central mainland along the Siriwo River to Geelvink Bay.

Dr. Stutterheim, however, was not happy at his new Post. He found himself unable to carry on with the work, and begged to be relieved of his duties.

By this time the base at Enarotali comprised the District Officer and a doctor, a radio operator (both Indonesians), about twenty native police, 120 Papuan coolies who worked between the Post and Orawja, and twenty Javanese convicts. The Post, as it was then, consisted of one hut forty metres in length, a kitchen, a hut for the coolies and one for the convicts, and there was also a small hospital, the Bernhard hospital, named after Princess Juliana's consort. All these huts were made of bamboo, with a thatched roof, and the entire party lived within this simple compound.

Enarotali lay by the south-eastern shore of Lake Paniai, on a small marshy plain at the foot of a mountain range. The lake itself covers an area of about twenty-three square miles. It is almost entirely surrounded by mountains, which are dominated by the great Mount Deijai, which on a clear day, even from the coast, can be seen standing above all the surrounding peaks. In the Indonesian languages *Dewa* is the word for God. Is it possible that the Papuan word *Deijai* has the same meaning, for there are signs of Indonesian influence in the languages of these Papuan tribes, and it may well be that they regard this mountain towering like a guardian of the lake as the embodiment of some great power.

In the fertile valleys between the mountains and reaching down to the plains are a number of villages of Papuans of the Ekari tribe. The whole of the region of the lakes and that extending some distance to the west and to the east is in the territory of the Ekari people.

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All these Papuans of the central ranges of Netherlands New Guinea had lived in complete isolation until 1936/37. They are, perhaps, the most primitive people on earth, and in every respect still belong to the Stone Age. They had not even had any contact with the coastal tribes; thus their environment was entirely of their own making, without any outside influence whatever. They are dark—almost black—slight of build, mostly about five feet high and of what is known as pygmoid type. They have kinky hair and very flat feet, the latter striking evidence of their continuous padding through the marshes and over the mountain trails, which they cover with remarkable agility. At first it may appear that their life is carefree, but a deeper knowledge of their customs and beliefs shows that this is not so. Actually they live in perpetual fear of evil spirits, and there are numerous tribal differences which keep them on guard and bring inevitable strife. Some of their tribal laws too must cause considerable anxiety, such as that of killing the wife of a deceased man, and many a woman lives with this knowledge hanging over her.

Their needs are quite simple. They generally have two hot meals a day, morning and evening, which in the ordinary family community are cooked in the hot ashes, but for a larger number of people they usually cook the food under hot stones. This method is a sort of primitive oven made by digging a hole in the ground. Into this is placed a layer of hot stones covered with banana leaves, then a layer of meat also wrapped in leaves, next more stones, another layer of leaves, then vegetables also wrapped, and more hot stones on top, and so on layer upon layer of hot stones, food, and more hot stones. Any sort of cooking utensil is quite unknown to them. They make their fires in the primitive fashion by using a split stick, for of flint and its uses they know nothing. A suitable piece of stick about one inch thick is partially split, and a small stone inserted to keep

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the crotch open. Then a length of a species of rattan vine is placed under that. The toes of the Papuan hold the crotched stick firmly on the ground as the two ends of the rattan vine are pulled up and down, and it is not long before the friction causes smoke, and falling sparks ignite the tinder. Then the man blows on the sparks and soon the fire is burning. Their fire-making equipment is always ready, and usually is carried in their nets, or string bags, along with other personal possessions. However, they know what it is to go hungry, for their gardens may be robbed or suffer from drought, and they often travel great distances through unpopulated regions where no food can be obtained. Normally in their gardens they grow sweet potatoes, yam, taro, a species of cucumber, bananas, pawpaw, and the long bean similar to the Malayan *ketjipir*, also ginger and spinach. One of their special delicacies is raw ginger eaten with salt.

Until the advent of the white man clothes of any description were unknown to them; the women wore only a grass skirt, and the men the long, dried, gourd-like penis covering which is known as a *koteka* in the Ekari language and *gosara* in the Migani. Though healthy, fifty years appears to be their average span of life.

Into this region, and to live amongst these people, at twenty-five years of age, and after only ten months' experience in the administrative service, came District Officer Dr. J. B. de Bruijn.

One wonders if the *helm* of his birth gave him the power to see what the next five years were to bring—explorations and discoveries of the greatest importance, his life and adventures with the Papuans, sickness, hardship, and endurance, the utter loneliness after the Japanese occupation of the East Indies, the loss of his only brother, who died in an internment camp at Singapore, the agony for his country under the Japanese yoke, the invasion of Netherlands New Guinea and his commando raid on an enemy coastal position, his



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intelligence work for the Netherlands East Indies Government, the capture and occupation of his base at Enarotali, his escape, the great and terrible decision to remain in the interior "because there was work to be done," hunted over the mountains, recognition by his Government and honour from his Queen, and his eventual forced evacuation at an age when many a man's work is scarcely begun.

## 2

*Observations of Carstensz and Colijn—De Bruijn's contact with the people—His views on administration and orientation.*

IT WAS in 1623 that the Dutch explorer Jan Carstensz first discovered the snow mountains of Central Netherlands New Guinea, and his was only what might be called a cursory glance, even though one of the highest peaks subsequently bore his name. In his *Journal* he records that his ships, *Pera* and *Arnhem*, were lying at about a mile and a half offshore and "at a distance of about ten miles by estimation into the interior we saw a very high mountain range, in many places white with snow, which we thought a very singular sight, being so near the line equinoctial" (actually the Carstensz Mountain is about fifty miles from the coast). In the three hundred years after Carstensz recorded his discovery, no white man is known to have even reached those mountain peaks and from them looked towards the mysterious beyond, until in 1935 Dr. H. Colijn made an expedition into the interior to the "mountains of eternal snow."

The country Colijn looked upon from those snow-capped peaks was strangely beautiful. It was a land of great rivers, grand canyons, and lovely valleys lying in distant mists beneath the banks of cloud that hung along the ridges. It was terrifying in its grandeur, impressive in its silence, and secure in its isolation. Since time began that vast central region had been unknown to white man. Only the mountain people knew its secrets, only they knew of the expanses of unpopulated regions, and of the fertile valleys where food could be obtained, and where silence lay over the deserted

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villages, abandoned because of the ghosts that inhabited them, and of the regions from whence came disease and evil spirits. Only they knew the great trade route that led from west of the lakes far away to the east to the valley of the Baliem, a trail over which for countless years bare flat feet had padded. They heard no silver bells as did the travellers on the journey to Samarkand, but they had their romances and their adventures, and as the years rolled by had gone a little farther, a little farther—

"Always a little farther: it may be  
Beyond that last blue mountain, barred with snow."

They were very strange, these people, though then nothing was known of their life and customs. Even early explorers who had ventured a few miles up the rivers from the coast thought those with whom they had come in contact were some of the most peculiar people ever seen or heard of. So much so, that one early record, written in quaint old Dutch, tells how an explorer had tried to catch one of these Papuans to send to Europe to put in a cage for exhibition. Even in the log of the *Pera*, under date of the 16th March, 1623, it is recorded:

"The people are cunning and suspicious, and by no finesse could they be induced to come near enough to let us catch one or two with the nooses which we had prepared for the purpose."

The stone-age people of the interior, however, complete in their isolation, knew nothing of these white intruders, and after Carstensz's first sight of the "eternal snows," three hundred years were to pass before their seclusion was broken. Three hundred years in the history of a country may or may not appear a long time, according to events; in central Netherlands New Guinea it could be as but an hour or a day—"A thousand ages . . . like an evening gone." In January

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1939, de Bruijn entered a land where time stood still.

This was the country he was to come to know, and in which he was to spend five years of his life amongst neolithic, stone-age people, and, stranger still, of whom he alone can now look back and say, "These men were my friends."

He knew neither the country nor the people, and knew nothing of their languages and tribal customs. Such information as had been gleaned was scanty, and some of it proved inaccurate. There were, however, some things he did know: one was the importance of first contacts.

"If first contact with the people is not good," he said, "the opportunity is never recovered. Once it is made it is always safe."

He knew the value of friendship, and was determined that these people should be his friends. Upon them rested not only the success or failure of his work, but his life itself lay in their hands. So he went to talk with them in their villages, and when they in turn came to him he went out of his way to make them feel welcome. He gave instructions that no fences were to be erected around the administrative huts at Enarotali, and to de Bruijn's hut no man, on any occasion, was to be denied admission.

"If we put up a fence, the people will think we are afraid or do not want them to come. They must be allowed to come in whenever they wish: only in that way can I get to know them."

In due course, as he gained their confidence, they visited his hut; sometimes they would stand quietly watching him at work, or would squat on the earthen floor and chat. Often they brought him presents, and might stay to lunch, and some even remained to spend the night by his fire. Never were they driven away. It is noticeable that de Bruijn never refers to them as "the natives"; to him they were always "the people."

Then, with a wisdom beyond his years, he began to study

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the problems of administration at first hand, and he expressed his views to Resident Magistrate Janssen, at Amboina, a man of rare understanding. These views were not only accepted, but later were delivered as a lecture on civil administration in Netherlands New Guinea.

"In 1939," de Bruijn said, "the Post at Enarotali was a new experiment, because it was the first time an Administrative Post had been established in a country of people who were still living in the neolithic stone-age period, and in a region which had always been isolated from foreign influences and even from Indonesian influence, so the people have preserved their own racial origins and customs. In this twentieth century there is not much opportunity to study a race in its natural surroundings. . . .

"The administration," he continued, "should be divided into two periods, the first to be one of exploration, orientation, observation, and study, and should occupy seven years. Then the change over could be made to one of full administration.

"It is necessary, firstly, to know the language, for this gives the people an assurance and confidence. At first they are naturally shy and suspicious, but if they hear their own language spoken, they will say: 'He speaks our language. Let us stay and listen to what he has to say.'

"Another point is to make a study of their social anthropology, which oftentimes can be used to advantage.

"The administration of stone-age people is quite different from the administration of other islands in the Indies, where contact with Western civilization has already been made. In the central mountains you cannot use methods based on Western standards, but when these people make the contacts they need supervision. This does not mean they must be placed in reserves, because they are by no means a dying race. On the contrary they are strong, healthy, and virile. The main thing is to treat them as human beings. They are

sensitive and child-like, with a certain amount of cunning, and like a child very sensitive to rough treatment.

"All these things are very important in handling the people. Compare, for instance, the difference between the mountain and coastal peoples. The mountain people are happy and always joking and singing. For example, at Mimika, on the south coast, they say, 'Sir, is it allowed to sing?'; those from the west say, 'Sir, we are going to sing'; but the people of the mountain tribes just sing at any time without thought, because it is the natural thing for them to do. Some, who have not understood their psychology, have snubbed them and stopped their singing. Such things are never forgotten.

"The coastal people oftentimes have had civilization and Western customs thrust upon them, and then their own society is apt to be destroyed. Such a situation is accepted, but gradually the spirit dies as the oil of a lamp burns out."

Thus, de Bruijn set for himself, just as he advocated for others, a seven-year course of orientation amongst these simple and primitive people. As events turned out, however—the necessities brought about by the war, the difficulty in carrying supplies, and arming the population—before three years had passed the administration automatically and unavoidably slipped into the second period. Nevertheless, the Government has realized that the new situation requires of the Netherlands Indies civil official a greater objectivity, insight, diplomatic talent, and wisdom.

"The qualities of an experienced observer and councillor," writes Kat Angelino, in his *Colonial Policy*, "are becoming more important than the dynamic young worker."

Only by moderation and patience, study and orientation, can a thorough knowledge be obtained, and the results are far more important than trying to circumvent the longer course with a view to quick recognition and promotion.

One morning, soon after his arrival at Enarotali, de Bruijn

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came from his hut and stood drinking in the beauty of his surroundings. The early mists had risen from the lake, whose waters now glistened in the bright light of the sun. He saw the south bank, where the steep cliffs fall sheer into the water, and on the northern bank the expansive swamps and peat bogs that from a distance look like fertile grasslands. About him lay Ekadide, the plain of the Eka River, and the land of the Ekari tribe, where he had come to make his home. Nearby, Mount Deijai, heavily timbered and cloud-capped, rose to 11,811 feet, over 6,000 feet higher than the place at which he stood. On the slopes, and at the foot of the mountain, rested the nine or ten villages and the lush vegetable gardens of a happy population of about four hundred people living in the vicinity of Enarotali.

His eyes turned again to the expanse of Lake Paniai, and for some time he watched the Papuan canoes lazily bobbing up and down in the breeze. In them he could see women handling the big crayfish nets, and bringing in their haul. On one of the canoes a roof of grass had been erected, a portent of rain, and from others plumes of smoke could be seen rising and wafting towards him, for these people light fires in their canoes and cook their meals as they fish. Sometimes the men dive, and remain under water for about two minutes, and when they come to the top they make a whistling noise that can be heard some distance away.

The buildings about him at the Base Post were all of Papuan workmanship, with saplings for beams, bamboo walls tied with rattan vine, and bark roofs. A path from the small landing jetty at the lake led through the station. That was all. There were no facilities of any kind.

This was what de Bruijn had asked for and he made no complaints. Indeed, he was very happy, for already he had made some friends among the people, and now he was planning his first expedition into an unknown region to the north-east. No white man knew what lay there.

### 3

*De Bruijn's first expedition—The Migani people—Meeting with Soalekigi—Salt wells—Discovery of the Kemaboe River, Mount Hindaminda, and the source of the Baliem River—Feast at Zanepa.*

EARLY IN the morning of the 20th February, 1939, before the mists had begun to roll up the mountain slopes, de Bruijn left Enarotali on his first journey of exploration. It was just one month after his arrival at the lakes, and one can imagine the keen excitement with which he set out on his first adventure in unexplored territory.

The expedition comprised thirty-seven members in all—District Officer Dr. de Bruijn, a Dutch botanist, a Sundanese medical officer, the *Bestuursassistent* (Administration Assistant, an Indonesian), five police, an N.C.O. and twenty-six carriers, sixteen of whom were *Aitinjos*, from the Vogelkop Peninsula—the bird-like head of the island. The remaining ten were convicts.

At first the party followed a trail leading through the peat-bog swamps by the Weaboe River, then climbed the southern hills and descended the slopes on to muddy plains, until they came to heavy rocky country, where boulders of 100–120 feet high barred their way like great stone walls. It had not been easy walking or very pleasant in any way, but their spirits rose considerably at their first sight of the village of Koegapa, where it lay at the eastern end of the Oeroemoeka Valley, nestling on the slopes where the mountains begin to rise to the great Bondege Range at 13,100 feet. This was the village through which Dr. Cator



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had passed on his way to the lakes in November 1937, when he made his first trip into the interior.

When the Administration Base at Enarotali was first established, both Assistant Resident Magistrate Dr. Cator and Police Commissioner van Eechoud had commenced the compilation of a word list of the Ekari and Migani languages, but their time had been so short and so fully occupied that all they could do was to lay a foundation for anyone who followed. It was a good beginning, and very useful to de Bruijn, who daily throughout the period of his first expedition studied assiduously to enlarge the word list and to learn to speak both languages. To him, natural linguist, it was not very difficult, because the syllable stress, the rounded vowels, and the vowel endings are very similar to and have the same musical lilt as Italian.

The people of the Migani tribe, in the village of Koegapa, form one of the few enclaves in an Ekari territory. Some generations back the Miganis had migrated from a district in the east, about three weeks distant (to them distance is only measured by the time it takes to travel), to escape the interminable inter-clan feuds that would have brought about the extinction of the clan. Even now, in this more peaceful area, they continue their war-like habits and remain a terror to the Ekaris, who will only fight them in self-defence, except of course when deliberate raids on their gardens occur. These are frequent, because the rocky nature of the country in which Koegapa is situated naturally makes for poorer gardens, and the Miganis frequently visit the nearby Ekari villages with the deliberate object of stealing their vegetables. De Bruijn witnessed one of these disturbances when, at a later date, he stayed overnight at Timila, an Ekari village to the west of Koegapa. In the middle of the night there was great yelling and excitement, and all the people rushed out after some Miganis who had been seen robbing the gardens, but the chase did not go very far. The Ekaris



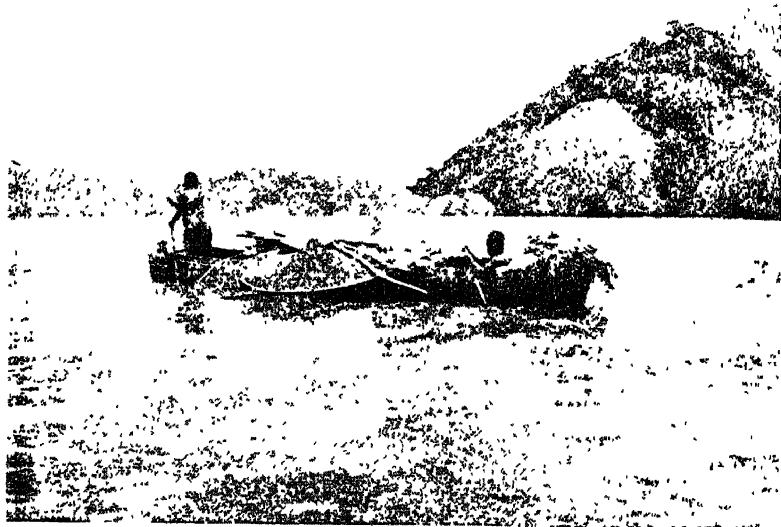
THE ESTABLISHMENT AT ENAROTALI.

"All these huts were made of bamboo, with a thatched roof, and the entire party lived within this simple compound" (see p. 21).



VILLAGE OF ENAROTALI, BY LAKE PANIAL.

"In their gardens they grow sweet potatoes, yam, taro . . ." (see p. 23).



NATIVE CANOES WITH CRAYFISH NETS.



"The village square where people met and sat and talked, made their bags and arrows, while the children played."

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don't like being out at night: there are too many ghosts about.

For all this, the Miganis are a superior race and are very conscious of being so. Not only are they superior in warfare, but ordinarily conduct themselves with better manners and greater dignity. They are a proud people, more reserved, and unlike the Ekaris will never ask or beg—stealing from their gardens when they are short of food is altogether a different matter.

Koegapa was one of a group of small villages covering an area about a mile long, in which lived Papuans of the Moni or Migani tribe. It was de Bruijn's first contact with these people, and he found them very friendly; they called him *Hoekomanggaramé*, the man who has come by plane, for they had heard of his landing on Lake Paniai a month earlier.

If his reception at Koegapa could be taken as any criterion, it certainly augured well for the rest of the expedition. His first impression pleased him immensely, for he had arrived at one of the most attractive little villages to be found anywhere in the mountains. The village itself, nestling among the rocks on the hillside, was nicely built. In the centre was a charming, colourful village square where the people met and sat and talked, made their bags and arrows, while the children played. It was clean and tidy, and in this respect quite unlike the majority of the communal meeting-places seen in other villages. Papuan huts lined the four sides of the square, shaded by fine old casuarina trees and gay with borders of red and white balsams and masses of gorgeous crotons; it almost wore an air of civic pride. On one side, in the shadow of a particularly fine tree, stood a "dead house" built above the ground and with a gable roof, rather like a pigeon loft, in which reposed the mummified body of Amenogambole, the revered father of Ikomaboei, the present chief of Koegapa. Amenogambole had been

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born and spent all his life in Keogapa, but his father, one Webega, according to tribal legends, had been a son of Waholo, the youngest brother of Sitoegoemina, who originally came from Doemandora, and it was Sitoegoemina (de Bruijn later was to learn the importance of this legend) who went far away to the west and lived in the country of the white people, and thus became the common ancestor of the present white people and the Papuans of the central mountains.

Thus Ikomaboei, the chief of Koegapa, who received the new *kontolulle* was descended from a line of people of great importance in the history of the tribe, and was fully aware of this hereditary distinction and carried the honour with much dignity. He was, at this time, about sixty years of age, and therefore considered to be an old man. His age and his bearing made him appear rather severe in appearance and in manner, but he was a gentleman and always conducted himself as such, taking much care and pride in his appearance, which is to say his *gosara*, his sole article of apparel, was well cared for and his face was always painted with red clay, which in addition to adding colour, served the desirable purpose of covering a good deal of dirt. Ikomaboei had a son of whom he was very proud, for the boy had been born during one of the many wars with the Ekari people of the Weadide Valley, and to commemorate the occasion, and presumably a victory, had been named Bolemala—war-arrow.

The old chief's hut, forming one side of the village square, had its entire front decorated with the jaws of pigs, which served as a continual reminder to all the people of his importance and the number of pigs he had eaten.

Also in this village lived Kigimoajakigi, another renowned gentleman who had been to Amboina with the Resident Magistrate in December 1938, and went again in April 1939. As a consequence of his experiences in the Western world

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Kigimoajakigi came back to his village with a lot of presents and many new ideas. In all probability he was the first reformer among the mountain peoples, and though, doubtless, more for his own pleasure than that of his wife was responsible for the first, and perhaps the only, move towards "the emancipation of women" of his tribe. It came about in this way. Among the many things he brought from Ambon was a number of pillows, but the *pièce de résistance* was a large bed, and to house these beautiful things he built a fine new hut for himself and his wife (in this respect he was modest, for he only had one wife). Now this domestic arrangement was a great and daring innovation, because among the Zonggonao people it is the custom for the men and women to sleep in separate huts, and the spouse of Kigimoajakigi must have been the envy of many of the ladies of Koegapa. Perhaps he also felt the need for some self-protection, as included in the Ambon acquisitions was a bottle of kerosene, and whenever he became angry, particularly with the Ekari people, he threatened to use the *oesa doe* (Firewater) against them.

This gentleman of modern ideas and great possessions also had two goats, two fine Bengal goats, which he had got from the Resident Magistrate at Amboina, and these animals, tenderly cared for by their proud owner, were so happy in their new surroundings that in later days de Bruijn was able to buy some of their progeny to introduce new blood into his own stock at Enarotali.

When the expedition moved on new guides were readily obtained at Koegapa; moreover Kigimoajakigi himself accompanied the party. Because of his sturdy build, commanding voice, and habit of strutting about "with a high chest like someone who considers himself the most important person in the world," de Bruijn immediately called him "the General," and the name stuck to him throughout. The General, having returned from Ambon only one month

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previously, was well equipped for the expedition, and marched "fully dressed" in trousers, jungle shoes and puttees, hat, and dark glasses. In accordance with this impressive appearance and the dignity of his "rank" he bore his sufferings stoically, as became an old soldier, and never once removed his shoes, even though he could hardly walk in them because of the many blisters on his feet.

Across marshy ground they marched, by deserted gardens, uphill through country thickly covered with ferns, climbing to an altitude of 8,000 feet. Often in the unpopulated regions they walked along the top of the range, which sometimes was fairly level, but often had a "broken bottle-like" edge, with sharp ridges where the rains had washed deep holes in the chalky soil. They were traversing a country as old as time and forsaken through the ages.

On the evening of the second day they were glad to make camp by a small brook and wait for the carriers, who were about two hours behind the head of the party, to come in. A curious feature of the district, and one which makes travelling particularly dangerous, is the number of extraordinary well-like holes. They are so deep that a pebble can be heard to hit at the bottom, but they are quite dry on account of the porous nature of the country.

Next morning it was a great relief to find the trail led downhill through forest country until they came to a small tributary of the Egaboe River, swiftly flowing by the foot of a mountain. The stream was crossed by means of a trunk bridge, and again there was nothing but a muddy plain until they called a halt at Eagidide, a poor settlement of the Ekari, where sugar-cane and yams were obtained, but no pigs were seen.

The fourth day of the expedition was one of great importance to de Bruijn. They were continuing along the trail when, close by the village of Toujamoeti, they met a Zonggonao chief of the Migani tribe travelling with his four

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wives and family and a great *entourage* of friends and followers. The reputation of this chief, Soalekigi, was already known at Enarotali, for he was a person of some experience, and de Bruijn was anxious to make his acquaintance. In 1937, when Assistant Resident Magistrate Dr. Cator made his first attempt to reach the Wissel Lakes, he had met Soalekigi and two of his brothers along the trail, and when the expedition had to be abandoned they returned to the coast with Dr. Cator, and Soalekigi accompanied him back to Fak Fak. Van Eechoud also had known him.

De Bruijn, however, was not quite prepared for the warmth of the reception he was about to experience. The man whom he now met was about fifty years of age, with a very high forehead and quite bald, and tall and thin. He wore an old pair of shorts and a battered hat, both relics of Dr. Cator's and van Eechoud's outfit, and he walked with a slight limp, for behind one knee he carried a nasty scar where once an arrow had pierced him. Nevertheless he was straight and proud of bearing; the very set of his head gave him an air of dignity. He knew, of course, that this white man could be none other than the new District Officer, for he had heard of his coming.

Both the Chief and the District Officer were aware of the importance of the occasion. It was a time for ceremony and best behaviour, and each was out to make a good impression: Soalekigi to show his knowledge of the "outside world," and de Bruijn to show his familiarity with Papuan customs. They offered hands—Soalekigi, proudly, with open hand in the European manner, de Bruijn with closed fist and the forefinger raised and crooked, as did the Papuans. Thus their hands met, and the result was a bit of a fumble. That night de Bruijn noted in his diary: "East is east, West is west, but half-way is not the best."

Soalekigi spoke:

"*Aligamè* (friend), I am chief of the village of Itodah,



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of the Moni tribe. I know your country, because I have been to Fak Fak, in the land of the Western people. Very few of our mountain tribe have ever left this country. I am your friend. Welcome *ame*."

Further formal speeches were made on both sides, de Bruijn replying haltingly because his knowledge of the Migani language was not yet very good. Then Soalekigi called the people together and told them that the new *Kontolulle* had come (to them the *Controleur* was known as the *Kontolulle*, their nearest approach to the correct pronunciation), and after this they all danced for about half an hour and a great feast of welcome was prepared.

Soalekigi was a very important man among his own people, and a very great man; moreover, he was a gentleman. Later experience showed how loyal a friend he could be. His acceptance of the new *Kontolulle* was immediate, and it is a tribute to de Bruijn's personality and approach that from that day forth Soalekigi always referred to him as his best friend. The chief's recognition and acknowledgment were done graciously.

When Soalekigi and his brothers had been at the coast, most of the party were stricken down with malaria, and the youngest brother died of the fever. Soalekigi also became ill, but after receiving large doses of quinine he recovered and was able to go on with the party. Malaria is unknown in the healthy climate of the central mountain ranges, and cure from this new and horrible disease, which had caused his young brother to die, was to the chief nothing short of a miracle. It made a great impression on him, and amongst the people the story has lost nothing by repetition (except, perhaps, something of the truth), and quinine pills have become almost magical. In some way, Soalekigi thought, the *Kontolulle* reminded him of his youngest brother: he had four brothers, but the youngest had been his favourite. Graciously he named de Bruijn *Memoeroe*, the youngest,

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thereby accepting him as one of his family. The *Kontolulle* had made his first friend.

When the dancing and feasting were ended, the party prepared to move on, and Soalekigi gave further evidence of his friendship by turning about in his tracks, and with his wives and children and all his friends and followers accompanied the party throughout the rest of the journey.

They came to the Egaboe River, which had to be crossed by means of a rattan bridge, which, however, was so narrow that the coolies had difficulty in getting the loads over and the Zonggonao people came to their assistance. From then on, thanks to Soalekigi, the expedition received a most enthusiastic welcome at every village they reached. Pigs were brought as presents, and sugar-cane and yams were in plenty. Everywhere along the route the new District Officer made a royal entry, and at each village he mingled with the people, talked with them, and tried to learn something of their habits and customs. A great deal of de Bruijn's success during the whole of his administration was due to the friendly atmosphere created during this first expedition, and can be attributed to the fact that at all times he associated himself with the people and tried to be as one of them. It was all a part of his plan of orientation. For their part they liked his natural and simple manner, for he has the humility of the great, though some were to learn his strength of character and the force of his decisions.

The party moved on until they came to the Araboe River, where the local people helped them across in canoes and invited them to stay overnight at their village of Koemopa. They brought them more pigs, but instead of the customary payment made in cowrie shells and beads they asked for quinine pills, by which, they thought, evil spirits and disease could be kept at bay, so far had the story of Soalekigi's cure penetrated.

Often as they moved along the trail, there was some con-

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siderable delay with the carriers, which was discovered to be due to a superstition similar to that of our own of walking under a ladder. Jungle trees threw out their great roots which arched and grew down into the ground again. Occasionally the track passed through these trees, and if de Bruijn led the way the others followed. Then, after about half an hour's walking they would suddenly realize what had happened. The awful tidings would be whispered down the line—they had walked through a tree, and that, surely, would bring bad luck to the party. There was nothing for it but for the leaders to sit down and wait while the line turned about, walked back to the tree and passing through it to the far side came round it and joined the trail again.

One day they saw a python sleeping, coiled about the branch of a huge tree, and all the people were very afraid. De Bruijn shared their dread of snakes of any kind, but not their superstitions. That same evening Soalekigi, obviously much agitated, came rushing up to the *Kontolulle* crying out:

"*Memoeroe, Memoeroe*, a man in the village is dying. He is one who has seen the snake. He is ill and says he is sure he will die to-night."

Taking his medicine kit with him, de Bruijn went over to see the man, who appeared to be mentally disturbed and restless, though he had no fever. Apparently it was an instance of nothing more than superstitious fear. He was given some aspirin and very soon made a remarkable recovery.

On this, the sixth day of the expedition, they made camp at Ginambarai, where the people brought them roasted bananas. It was a pleasant place in which to rest, for it is warmer here than at Enarotali; the jungle is richer in birds, and the little village, sitting on the crest of a small basin, has many good gardens on its slopes. This was the first place they reached in the Kemandora region, and it began a series

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of enthusiastic welcomes such as the party had never experienced or anticipated.

As they approached the village they heard a great noise of singing, and saw about a hundred people gathered together on the hilltop, all singing and dancing and making great rejoicing. De Bruijn and his party went up and joined with them. And so on, throughout the succeeding days, the same thing happened on almost every hill; it became a little monotonous and also impeded progress considerably, but it would never do, Soalekigi insisted, to leave until the ceremony was ended. And as they went from place to place so word of their coming sped before them, and the enthusiasm grew until the trail ahead became an embarrassment of festivities.

Next day, at Jotali, still in the country of the Ekaris, they saw their first salt well. It was known that salt wells existed in this valley of the Kemandora and that it was the source of considerable trading, but as no European had hitherto penetrated these regions, their whereabouts were not known. Van Eechoud, during his period at Enarotali, had been instructed to try to find them, but he was not in the region long enough to enable him to make an expedition.

The mountain people will travel great distances to obtain salt, which appears to be necessary to them, and sometimes may be away from their villages for weeks or months on end in order to gather fresh supplies for their own use as well as for trading.

Salt wells are usually nothing more than a small spring of briny water which is built around with stones to form a pool by the river's bank. Nearby will be a cluster of huts, in which the people congregate while the salt is being prepared for transportation. It is a peculiar thing that those who are making the salt bricks are mostly people of the more eastern Ndani tribe, even though most of the important wells are found in the Kemandora, the country of the Miganis.

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One method of making the salt bricks is to take a bunch of "salt weed," which is really a pepper plant, though it grows as a tree and not at all like the pepper vine. The weeds are soaked in the brine for about one day, or perhaps overnight, after which they are burned over a very hot fire of hardwood. They retain their shape and when baked are removed by tongs, then cooled and stone-crushed in troughs of hollow logs. Moulds of about 15 × 10 inches are then made and lined with leaves, into which the ash is packed, being sprinkled with water during the process, and it soon becomes quite hard. A "trader" will carry about three of these bricks. This, however, is the most laborious way of making them. A far easier method is that of digging a series of holes in the ground, lining them with leaves and then pouring in handfuls of mud lifted straight from the pool, tying the ends of the leaves at the top of the hole and then lighting a fire above it. After three or four days' roasting the salt cake can be lifted out like a hard stone. There is another and even simpler way, which is to tie up a handful or so of mud in leaves and hang it over the ordinary household fire. It soon hardens, and is scraped with the thumbnail or a sharp piece of stone whenever required for use.

In this region wild lemons are very plentiful, and the people are very fond of dipping them in a salt well and eating them.

A considerable number of these wells were found, and many others were reported to be in the same district.

On the ninth day the party came to a great river, which they learned was the Kemaboe. This was an entirely new discovery. It was of course known at Enarotali that numerous rivers flowed between the distant mountain ranges, but no stories of the mighty Kemaboe had reached the Post. No one knew, until de Bruijn discovered it, that it has its source in the snow mountains to the east, and coursing its way westwards until turning to the north it flows on to empty its

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waters into Geelvink Bay. The Kemaboe is now known to be the second largest river flowing to the north coast of Netherlands New Guinea, but until de Bruijn made his discovery in February 1939, no one knew its size or from whence it came. At the point where he first saw it, by the village of Balagetega, it is eighty-two feet wide, swiftly flowing, and quite unfordable, and with its great fall from this height to the coast it must obviously be considered dangerous for navigation, but the water was quite unusable because of discoloration on account of the limestone plateaux through which it flowed. The whole of the Kemaboe River, until it joins the Warenai towards the coast, is grey and dirty, and most of its tributaries are the same. The water was not only undrinkable, but was even too dirty to wash vegetables—quite apart from the fact that dead bodies might be floating down the stream; so of necessity they had to seek out a clear spring or little mountain stream before they could camp.

At Balagetega a large double-parapetted rattan bridge spanned the river, but the party did not attempt to cross it, and followed a trail leading eastwards to the village of Zanepa.

The establishing of friendships with the chiefs and people of the villages of Wandai, Masiga, and Zanepa, which they reached on the following days, was of the greatest importance. De Bruijn did not know this at the time; to him it was the natural thing to do, but his achievement during this, his first visit, enabled him in later days to use those villages as bases, and ensured friendship and help when it became necessary to do so.

Discoveries and excitements, however, were not yet ended, for as they proceeded towards Zanepa, the tenth day of the expedition, when they were walking along the trail between Wandai and Masiga they saw a huge mountain in the distance. "*Hindaminda*," said the people, which so far as de Bruijn could make out meant, in the Migani language,

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"the coming of the day," for from this point from time everlasting their ancestors had watched the rising of the sun.

De Bruijn was deeply moved as he looked upon its grandeur. In his own words, he says:

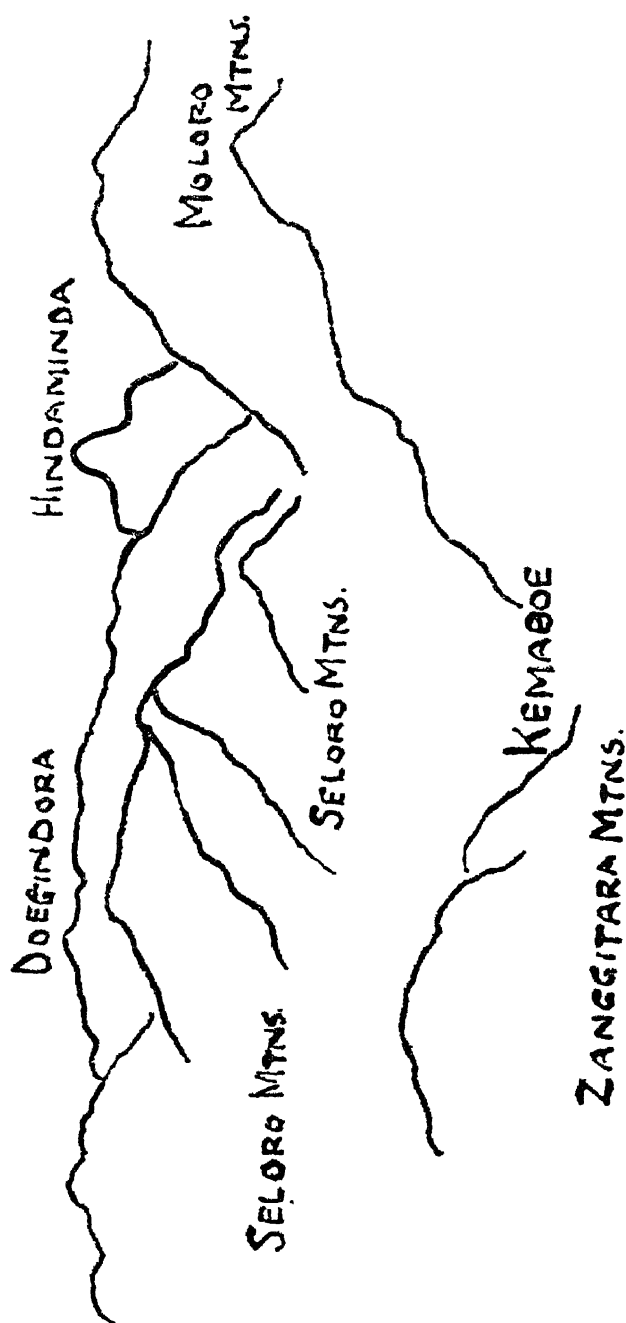
"You look right down the valley. The steep sides are dotted with numerous villages. Columns of smoke gently rise towards the sky. Houses and gardens lie among the rich vegetation of a great fertile valley, whose sides are occasionally scored by landslides making slate-grey wounds in the jungle green. Beyond, irregular in shape, and isolated, rises Hindaminda, 9,000 feet, silhouetted against the sky."

Zanepa, the final and most easterly point of the expedition, was reached on the eleventh day. Their reception by the people was most cordial, and they rested there for four days, during which celebrations were held and all kinds of vegetables were cooked, and the people brought in fifteen pigs for the grand feast. Even the killing of the pigs caused much excitement, for the people were so impressed by the men's guns that they asked for the pigs to be shot. Over and over again they pleaded to hear the *Higimumala*, the thunder arrow. To please them de Bruijn gave the order, and the first pig fell.

"Zoo" (so, that's that), he said, a little habit of his which already had been picked up by the carriers; nor were the Zanepa people slow. The next pig fell.

"Zoo," uttered several voices, and as the killing proceeded, "zoos" swelled from the whole population in chorus.

As he entered the villages in the Kemandora de Bruijn had noticed small fences erected across the trails, and he was told that these were to keep away the ghosts. The houses were the same as those of the Ekaris, but their tribal laws and customs were quite different. All their gardens were fenced, though mostly to keep the pigs out, but inside each garden was a small plot, also fenced, where a cluster of yams and sweet potatoes grew. This reserve was never touched by the



"Irregular in shape, and isolated, rises Hindaminda, 9,000 feet, silhouetted against the sky."



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people, but was set aside solely as food for the more adventurous ghosts who might, so to speak, jump the fence. The Miganis had no objection to de Bruijn using the food from these plots, and often he found the reserve supply very acceptable. The attitude of these people was, "If you are not afraid of the ghosts and care to take the risk, go ahead and use it, but we will not touch it." Nor would they ever accept payment for anything he took. It was a free store.

In this Kemandora country the interior of the huts was festooned with strings of cowrie shells. It was the custom to hang them there when the house was built, in order to keep away evil spirits. Apparently simple and everyday things may contain some magic charm if used in the right way.

Before leaving on the return journey de Bruijn wrote a message:

"The gates of the east stand open for you now. Good luck and good trip."

This was signed by all the party and sealed in a bottle which was hung on a tree by their last bivouac at Zanepa, the most eastern village reached by the expedition. Six months later le Roux found it there and was cheered by its message.

Later, when de Bruijn made an expedition to Beura and Ielop, much farther to the east, a similar message was left at the Beura bivouac, but it has never been found, unless by the Japanese.

The journey back to Enarotali was made in five days. On the fourth day they reached Toujamoeti, where rafts were obtained, and after a hazardous journey along the meandering Araboe they arrived home at the lakes, five days after leaving Zanepa, twenty days from beginning to end.

Thus within two months from the date of his arrival in New Guinea de Bruijn had completed his first expedition. He had crossed the hitherto unknown Kemandora Valley,

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discovered the mighty Kemaboe River, found the salt wells, and looked upon Hindaminda. Moreover, he had found a friend, for Soalekigi, with his wives and family and his friends and followers, had returned to Enarotali with him. Why should he not do so? The *Kontolulle* was his best friend. Was he not also *Memoeroe*, the youngest?

*Meeting with Weakebo—The parting of the waters—Mado,  
the water ghost—Missions—Cowrie shells as currency—  
Price fixing.*

THE ESTABLISHMENT at Enarotali was growing: there were now ducks, sheep, goats, and pigs, all calling for daily attention and being encouraged to play their part in adding to the supplies. The ducks had been de Bruijn's own idea, and it had come to him quite by chance. When he was on his way to the Wissel Lakes to take up his appointment, he stayed overnight at Dobo, the Administrator's Post in the Aroe Islands, and during the evening he saw a lot of ducks wandering about the street.

"Zoo," said he. "It will be a good thing to have ducks at Enarotali"; so he bought some, had them packed into crates and put on the plane, and when the dawn broke they were already on their way to a new home in the central mountains. Later, in February, another plane brought a consignment of sheep, goats, and pigs: the latter were a great success. All the mountain pigs were black, or black with white spots, but these imported ones were two white females. Never before had the Papuans seen all-white pigs, and they watched them, fascinated, for a long time. At intervals they wandered over to look at the goats, but interest in them soon waned, and they came back again and again to gaze upon these lovely white creatures. The two pigs were quite young, so they had to be kept in an enclosure for a few weeks until they reached the age of maturity, if not discretion, when they were let loose amongst the locals of the mountains and increased their



A SALT WELL NEAR WANDAI  
(discovered during the Kemandora expedition, February 1939).



WEAKEBO AND HIS YOUNGEST DAUGHTER, MADIA.



RATTAN BRIDGE,  
built by the Zanepa people and used by de Bruijn on his trip to Beura



WEAKEBO MAKES HIS FAMOUS SPEECH.  
"I am your chief and I choose the *Kontohulle*. Who will follow me?"  
(see p. 127).

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popularity by proceeding to multiply exceedingly.

A very important matter that had to be taken in hand was that of better conditions for the coolies. Up to this time they had been recruited on a six months' contract, but the new District Officer arranged for the term to be reduced to four months, on a pay of 40 cents a day. Their main diet had been of sago, and it was seen that this was not sufficiently sustaining for the work they were doing. As a result two men had died, so it was ordered that rice should be substituted whenever possible. There were, however, difficulties in importing rice from Java in sufficient quantities, so, in addition to sweet potatoes, they were given one meal of sago and one of rice each day, but when they went out on patrol, every man had rice at each meal. Their condition soon improved, and it added a good deal towards the harmony of the camp.

All these supplies had to be brought in from the coast: two days by canoe from Oeta to Orawja (sometimes the journey took four days), and then carried along the trail to Enarotali, at that time a nine days' trek, with each man carrying a load of 40 lb.

One day in March de Bruijn went out to Jaba, a village on the western bank of the Jawe River, for the purpose of making the acquaintance of the village chief, Weakebo, one of the Mote clan of the Ekari tribe. Weakebo had not the reserve and discrimination of the Migani chief, Soalekigi, but was one of those naturally jolly men, friendly by nature, and everybody's friend. He was short and broad, a solid figure, and obviously of outstanding personality. Also he was a born statesman, an attribute which de Bruijn was to find a considerable advantage on many occasions. Like many another of his kind, he was both an orator and a rascal, and although he had many sound ideas, they were often found to have an ulterior motive not altogether detrimental to his own welfare. Weakebo could talk his way into or out of anything.

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De Bruijn found him to be both cordial and helpful. Indeed, although the friendship was never as deep as it was with Soalekigi, the contact made that day was sincere and lasting.

In his own village Weakebo was all-important. His father, the old chief Jemaijawi, was still alive, but he was a very old man and took no active part in affairs of state. He had done his duty by his people and served them well in war and peace, even to the extent of having had, in all, thirteen wives, who had borne him many children. Now his son, Weakebo, ruled in his stead; not his eldest son, for the title is not hereditary, but falls upon the most important man in the village. It so happened that the garrulous and vociferous Weakebo had talked himself into the job, but that was not a bad thing.

Weakebo at that time wore no clothes; he dressed only in his *koteka*, the penis tube of dried gourd. In fact, de Bruijn never encouraged these people to wear clothes; dirty tattered garments were unhealthy and added nothing to their beauty or dignity, and he was to find, later, that a number of clans regarded them, even as worn by the white people, as harbingers of disease. Their distrust and dislike not only amounted to ill-feeling but, on one occasion at least, led to open war. They were better left in their natural state.

From the people of Jaba came the legendary story surrounding the father of Weakebo. Jemaijawi was not only a very great chief, he had been a renowned warrior in his day. In the far-off times when he was a young man, he had fought the Oehoendoeni people on the far side of the Jawe River. He had taken chosen men from his clan and set off to wage war, but his opponents were too strong for him, and after a fierce encounter drove him back to the bank of the Jawe. And it came to pass that as they reached the river the waters were divided and there, before them, was dry land, and Jemaijawi and his people went into the midst of the river upon the dry ground and, as happened to the children of

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Israel, "the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left." After they had passed over into their own land the waters closed and cut them off from their enemy. This story, as a parallel to the crossing of the Red Sea, is interesting to record, because it was in circulation among these people long before any European or missionary or native teacher had entered the territory, and before Jemaijawi and any of his people had had contact with coastal Papuans.

While he stayed at Jaba de Bruijn had his first contact with a "wonder doctor." He had heard that the man was in the village, so pretending to have a sore knee he sought him out. The man was not distinguished from any of the other people of the village in any way by dress or paint or "make-up." He came along and examined de Bruijn's "sore" knee, looked wise, and massaged it well. Then he put his mouth to it and made a sucking noise, as one might do to a snake wound to draw out the poison. When he withdrew his mouth, the man made signs that the cure was effected, and gave proof by spitting out some blood and about ten pieces of small bone (probably those of mice), but de Bruijn had to admit that the weakness on his part was that he had omitted to examine the man's mouth before he started the performance.

All these people are intensely superstitious, and probably their greatest fear is of ghosts. In this respect the Ekari are no less sensitive than any other tribe, and many things that are mystic, or at any rate without substance, are represented in their language by a common term. For instance the Ekari word *Aja* may mean (1) an echo, (2) a shadow, (3) a reflection in the water, (4) the soul of someone after death. From such things as ghosts they seek protection during the course of their daily life by wearing in their woven armlets the strongly camphor-scented leaves of the *Dako* plant; but the evil spirit they fear most is the *Mado*, who, like the



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mermaid, is said to have the habit of luring mortals to a watery grave.

The *Mado*, or the water ghost, always lives in still water, and has often been said to appear in Lake Paniai, where there are, of course no currents. Often, somewhere in the woods, you will find still and silent pools, and these are places to be avoided, for there, surely, will be the *Mado*, and if you don't make a good detour around such a place, one of those long-haired creatures may drag you down to the depths of its home. So the Ekaris will tell you, and add the caution, "Whatever you do, don't speak loudly when you are near such pools; whisper only. It is better, though, not to speak at all."

A *Mado* story of Lake Paniai tells of two Papuan women who were out in their canoe, and while occupied with their fishing a *Mado* came to the surface, and without warning took them in a wet embrace and dragged them both to the depths of the lake.

Paniai had an evil reputation, and for a long time de Bruijn's own policemen regarded it as a region inhabited by ghosts. His first experience of this occurred within a few days of his arrival. It happened at about seven o'clock at night when the Papuans, at least, were safe in their homes, for it is a rare thing for them to venture forth after dark. The stillness of the night was broken by the sound of a shot, then another, down by the south-east corner where the lake drains into the river, then another—seven in all. The Administration canoe was sent out to see what it was all about, and met a policeman and some convicts in another canoe who were on their way in with a transport of supplies from Bivak Prahoe, rowing to Enarotali. When they were near one of the capes of the south-western corner (and they all swore by their story) they saw an unusually large canoe with fire burning in it, bearing in their direction. They were certain it was a "ghost ship," because not only was it illuminated by the

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burning fire, but it was riding a little above the water and not in it. They all got very excited, and the policeman fired a shot, but still it came on, nearer and nearer, and more shots were fired, none of which were effective, until with the seventh shot, when about forty yards away, "it" disappeared. There was much excitement and incoherent explanation when the policeman reported the incident to his sergeant at Enarotali. The sergeant, however, was not at all sympathetic, and angrily snorted:

"Seven bullets equals seven by twenty-three cents, equals one hundred and sixty-one cents thrown to the ghosts."

A similar incident was described a few days after the Sudanese Dr. Adang Roushdy had been drowned in Lake Paniai, in May 1939. It was 2 a.m., and a very dark night, when one of the Administration canoes, with a policeman and two convicts as paddlers, was on the way from Enarotali. Their object was to arrive at Bivak Prahoe at daylight to meet a supply transport which had arrived the day before from Orawja. When they were off the second cape, at the spot where the Doctor lost his life, they saw in the distance a canoe with a fire burning in it.

"Let's go over and see what they are doing," suggested one of the convicts, and so they rowed over, and when they were within about ten yards of the canoe it mysteriously disappeared, and there was nothing but the stillness of the black night, the splashing of the water, and the beads of perspiration on the foreheads of the three men. It is a fact, however, that in the early morning and late afternoon, because of the light reflection, canoes often appeared to be floating in the air, hovering above the water. It is a strange sight, especially when seen for the first time. It was natural that the people should be apprehensive, and de Bruijn often commented on the illusion. To the sceptic, however, many of these sudden disappearances may be attributed to whirlpools, which are frequent and exceedingly strong.

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In January 1939, the Rev. C. R. Deibler, of the American Christian and Missionary Alliance, arrived at Wissel Lakes on a visit, but departed again in the same plane that brought de Bruijn to his new Post and evacuated District Officer Stutterheim.

In the following April, the Rev. Deibler and his colleague, the Rev. W. M. Post, arrived together and commenced their mission work among the people by setting up *goeroes* (native teachers) in Enarotali, Oewamani, Daroto, Beko, Oretadi, Kebo, and Koemopa.

Already the Roman Catholic Mission of "The Sacred Heart," under the guidance of Father Tillemans, had been established at Oeta, and every three months the priest hiked over the trail from the coast to the interior to visit his *goeroes*, who were operating first at Jaba (the village of Weakebo) and later at Wagele, Mejepa, Dijai, Enarotali, Timila, Koegapa, Wotai, and Keniapa. Father Tillemans made his first overland trip in June 1938, and established his first *goeroe* at Jaba in March 1939.

It is a pity that Pastoor Tillemans, who is now only about forty-two years of age, has never written reports of his experiences, which have only been told verbally to a few of his friends. If he would write as he can talk there would be a remarkable and most readable record, for he is very much a man of the world, with a good sense of humour, a tolerant understanding of the frailties of human nature, the temptations of the devil, and the weakness of the flesh. In addition to his fine achievements in the service of his church, he is a good walker, and holds the record of covering the distance from Enarotali to Orawja in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  days, whereas an ordinary person takes  $3\frac{1}{2}$  days. In June 1939 he made a trip from Enarotali through unexplored country to the Omba River at the coast, south-west of the Wissel Lakes. He took with him as guides some of the people from Jaba, and was forty days on the trail. This Omba trip was a great achievement,

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and one which he should have put on record. Written in the inimitable manner in which he tells a tale, it would have been something really worth while.

With the arrival of Deibler and Post to open up work on behalf of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, de Bruijn was anxious to avoid any possible friction between the heads and the *goeroes* of the two religions working in the same areas. In April 1939 he called the two parties to Enarotali for a conference. Both Missions had a Government subsidy for two schools (*Beschavingsscholen*), each in the Wissel Lakes subdivision. At his suggestion a gentleman's agreement was made, by which the Roman Catholic Mission should operate in the southern part of the Administrator's subdivision, and the C.A.M.A. in the northern part. He made a division from Beko through Enarotali to Koegapa, and only at Enarotali, where he himself stayed and could keep an eye on things, was it allowed that two *goeroes*, one of each mission, should remain. This agreement worked very well, and it was so respected by both missions that there was never any sign of trouble between them, as has happened quite frequently in other regions.

The wives of the two missionaries came to Enarotali to join their husbands. They were the only white women ever to visit the central mountains. Mrs. Post and Mrs. Deibler arrived together in March 1940, eleven months after the two missionaries had taken up their work in the lakes district. The two women walked over the trail from Oeta, and covered the distance in the usual time of eight days. It was a remarkable achievement, because they were both quite inexperienced in walking over the slippery jungle paths. When they slipped they naturally grasped the nearest tree or bush for support. More often than not it was covered with thorns or ants, so they put on their gloves and wore them throughout the journey.

At the lakes they settled down to make their new homes as

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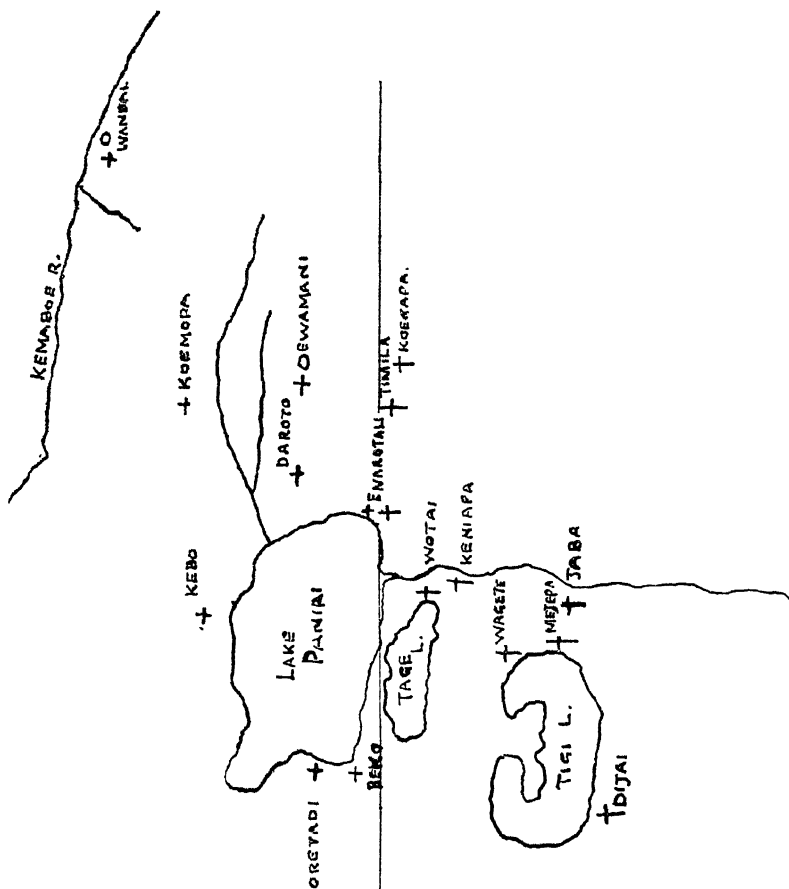
comfortable as possible. Mrs. Post was passionately fond of flowers, and soon had gay gardens about the mission station. One day de Bruijn admired a particularly fine show of snapdragons, and his hostess tried to persuade him to grow some about his own hut instead of the unchanging rows of peas and beans.

"But I don't eat flowers," he said. "I have to grow the things I can eat." There were days to come when he would have been glad of them.

Both women left Enarotali with their husbands when the Post was closed down in June 1940. Mr. and Mrs. Post returned to the lakes by plane on the 13th March, 1941, and Mrs. Post remained there until she left for Australia in December 1942. Her husband was evacuated with the main party six months later.

These missionaries, at that time, were the only white people in the interior who were not Government personnel (the *goeroes* were Amboinese, Kai Islanders, and some came from East Borneo), and they brought with them their own cowrie shells, the only local currency, as a result of which, with uncontrolled distribution, arose the problem of fluctuating values. Trading became more and more difficult; even Chinese coastal merchants wanted to come to the lakes to set up their shops, but were forbidden to do so. The Papuan people, too, were beginning to realize the niceties of supply and demand and introduced what amounted to their own idea of a trade union. At one time they were reluctant to take shells as ordinary payment, nor were they wanted as payment for marriage dowries, only perhaps for such things as sweet potatoes or pigs. They were cunning enough to know that the *Kontolulle* had plenty of shells in his store and began to raise their prices. Very soon they didn't want to sell at all.

The time had come for drastic action. De Bruijn ordered everyone to withhold all purchases and payment for one



+ Christian Missionary  
and Alliance goeres

+ Roman Catholic goeres.

DIVISION OF MISSIONS.

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week. It was a lockout strike. Then Weakebo took charge. He called all the people together and harangued them at length, and when he had subdued them concluded:

"You have disobeyed the *Kontolulle's* orders, and now you must make peace with him. You must go to him with presents and ask him to accept them for your disobedience, then you may ask him to buy from us again."

With contrite hearts they came with pigs and yams, sweet potatoes, and the very best cane they could find. De Bruijn accepted them, paid them for their "presents," and the whole affair concluded very happily with a glorious feast. "Money talks." At Wissel Lakes cowries talk!

A stabilized value was now set for the old and discoloured cowrie shells which had been in circulation before de Bruijn's arrival, and at the "peace table" new prices were fixed. As a concession, a dowry, which formerly had consisted of forty discoloured shells, was now established at forty new white shells and forty old ones. The missionaries were no longer permitted to import their own cowries, and supplies were only obtainable by a free monthly issue, made through the District Officer. Later, this restriction laid upon the missionaries was lifted, but prices remained pegged.

During de Bruijn's term as District Officer administrative history was made in many ways. This fixing of prices was one instance; it was unique in the history of the Netherlands East Indies, because the Wissel Lakes is the only district in the whole of the Netherlands Empire where "real" money is not in circulation; there are no N.E.I. guilders; the cowrie shell (*cypreamoneta*) is the only form of currency. Nevertheless, the Papuan of the central mountains has what to him is "real" and "false" money. The latter, the *pekoe mètè* as the Ekaris call it, would not be accepted in payment of dowry, pigs or sweet potatoes, etc. They are worth very little, and are used mostly as ornaments or perhaps at the time of a *kede joewo* (mouse feast) to buy mice. In all the Ekari

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people have thirty-two sorts of cowries—*kawané*, *bombojè*, *koebawiarakidi*, *beke* are but a few of the names given to different varieties.

The usefulness of the price-fixing regulation was very soon felt, because a few weeks later, when a Netherlands Geographical Society's expedition arrived at Enarotali, all kinds of articles were purchased as ethnographical specimens—bows, arrows, stone knives and axes, carrying bags, etc., and they were paid for on the basis fixed.

Cowries were divided into three grades: first quality—the large white ones: second quality—medium-sized yellow ones; and third quality—a grey one. Values were established on the basis of one four-gallon tin of sweet potatoes equals one cowrie shell of third quality; five arrows equals one cowrie of second quality; a bow equals three cowries of first quality, and so on. The experiences of previous expeditions in New Guinea had shown how the value of the cowrie could be depreciated to approximately one-tenth of its worth, and the stabilization made by de Bruijn saved the Wissel Lakes district from suffering a similar misfortune.



# 5

## *Transporting supplies—The Oeta Trail—Lake Paniai—Visit to Itodah—Orawja.*

THE TRANSPORT of supplies from the coast to the lakes was a long and laborious task. Setting out from the flat, humid coastal village of Oeta, where all supplies were landed, the first and second days of the journey were made upstream by canoe or outboard motor-boat, usually by canoes with about ten paddlers to each. Nipah swamps, jungle growth, and tropical vegetation grow right to the water's edge. The heat is stifling, and can be as oppressive as in any part of the East Indies Archipelago. There are no villages, only an occasional temporary dwelling on the sand-banks is seen. Perhaps a Papuan might be met, hunting in the jungle for wild sago, fruits, or rattan for trading. Towering towards the hard blue sky is one lone giant tree that is the landmark for Orawja. Somewhere about here the river changes its name: in the coastal region it is known as the Oeta, and higher up, where it flows from its source in Lake Paniai down to Orawja, it is known as the Oeroemoeka or the Jawe, names given to it by the Ekari people of the mountains.

Because of the rapids it is no longer possible to use the river upstream, and from Orawja the work of overland transport commences, bringing with it many hardships. Apart from the heavy going along the trail it is often difficult to get coastal coolies to go into the interior, partly because of the cold climate to which they are unaccustomed, but also because of their fear of ghosts, which appear to freely inhabit the mountain regions, and arrangements have to be

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made for carriers to be brought from the mountains to take over from them.

The river has to be crossed by means of a fine rattan bridge which spans it at Paukoenoe, and the bridge is kept in constant repair by the people. After this crossing the trail is either uphill or through low swampy grasslands, which are very heavy going in wet weather and not easy at the best of times. The estimated mileage along the trail is put down at approximately fifty miles, but it is time that matters and, according to the weather, it might take four, seven, or even nine days before Bivak Prahoe is reached, where the precipitous gorge leads into Lake Paniai. This can be the most dangerous stage of the journey. It is undertaken by canoe or motor-boat, and may be covered, even by canoe, under favourable conditions in about two hours. The actual danger lies, not as might be expected in the gorge itself, but in the turbulent waters of the lake. It looks calm and peaceful enough lying in the mountains with the soft mists hovering over it as the dawn breaks, but almost every morning, at about ten o'clock, a strong wind, blowing at about thirty or thirty-five miles an hour, sweeps across the lake from Stormhoek on the north-western shore, and whips the water into a dangerous swirl.

On one occasion—it was in April 1939, while he was attempting a trip in a canoe with a number of coolies—the Sundanese doctor, Adang Roushdy, was drowned. A very dazed coolie came running into Enarotali with an incoherent story, and before anyone could understand what had happened another appeared. Between the two it was gathered that the canoe had been overturned, and the doctor, in a valiant effort to save a man who could not swim, was dragged down and drowned. Immediately a patrol set out for the scene of the disaster—de Bruijn and eleven men. For two hours they walked in a terrific gale. A piercingly cold wind cut them, and rain beat down, blotting out their vision.

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Nevertheless they reached the spot, and for some time made a search for the body, but without success. As night fell the gale increased, so they decided to camp where they were, but about one hour of it was as much as they could stand, and at 7.30 in the evening they broke camp and left on the return journey to Enarotali. Twelve drenched and weary men, with only one flashlight between them, struggled over the wild terrain. It had been bad enough in daylight, but in the darkness of the night one false step might have sent them hurtling three hundred feet or more down the precipitous cliffs. It was one o'clock in the morning before they staggered, exhausted, into Enarotali.

Such was the route over which most of their supplies had to be brought, for in those days practically nothing came by plane. To lessen the labours of this journey de Bruijn decided to try to find a shorter and easier way to the coast. He had a long talk with Soalekigi, who, at the time, was staying in Enarotali, and they decided to explore the trail that led away to the south-west of Lake Paniai through Soalekigi's own village of Itodah.

Soalekigi, voluntarily, as on all occasions, acted as guide, philosopher, and friend. They followed the river down past Lake Tage, the smallest of the three lakes, surrounded by high mountains towering above the water and falling steep and rocky straight down into its depths. On the western bank the great Mount Deijai, whose summit has never been reached, rose, heavily timbered and cloud capped, as guardian of the ranges.

They came down to the north of Lake Tigi and entered into very different country, where the immediate surroundings were flat and swampy. Across the Mejepa, on the east bank, Lake Tigi drains itself into a short river, the Oneibo, about 550 yards in length. At first this stream is slow flowing, then develops into a strong current, but at a point about 120 yards farther, it suddenly becomes calm, flows quietly

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amongst the rocks, and then, without any sign of disturbance, disappears underground. Presumably, for no one knows just where, in its subterranean way it joins the Oeroemoeka.

It was the country to the north, however, in which lay their interest; the country where the soil, for the most part, is hard and white like baked sand. It carries few large trees, and where it gently rolls away are patches of ironstone, no longer wooded, but a scrubland, or a moor, covered with soft heath, and ablaze with masses of rhododendrons that seem to flower all the year round in a riot of colour and beauty. And in the midst of this they saw coming towards them three small dark figures. They were Boromakoemba, the favourite wife of Soalekigi, and two other girls from Itodah, walking to welcome the party and bringing presents of cane, potatoes, and fresh vegetables.

Boromakoemba was not beautiful; even the adoring Soalekigi could not claim that for her. She was very short and sturdy, but her attraction lay in the fact that she was always gay and laughing. She greeted de Bruijn in the motherly Migani way by tenderly stroking his chin and face. There was nothing shy about her.

It was a disappointment to Soalekigi that this, his favourite wife, bore him no child. In later days, however, she fulfilled his wish, and when Boromakoemba gave him a son the father's delight knew no bounds. He came to de Bruijn to tell him the glad tidings and asked:

"Memoeroe, what shall we call him? Will you give him a name?"

The boy was called Wilhelmus, and Soalekigi was very proud.

Itodah lies to the south-west of Lake Tigi, just by the fringe of the hot Edere plain, where the mountains begin to rise, and the rich black soil washed down their slopes makes fertile gardens. Nearby, under the casuarina trees, the fifteen

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or twenty huts comprising the village stand trim, clean, and orderly. Itodah is the only place in all the mountains in which people of Ekari and Migani clans live together. It came about that in former days, when Soalekigi was living in his former village of Koegapa, he decided it would be safer and more peaceful to move elsewhere, so with two of his brothers he left Koegapa and went away to the west. When they came to Itodah and planned to settle there, strangely enough, the Ekari people decided to accept them, and ever since the members of the two clans have lived in peace and harmony.

Here de Bruijn saw an interesting exhibition of the *Wainai* dance, a performance peculiar to the Ekari people. If a man is angry he suddenly jumps up, clutching his bow and arrow in war-like manner, and vigorously prances about, stamping his flat feet on the ground. He keeps on with this, sometimes making a pace forward or backward until he has let off steam. Then just as suddenly he stops and sits down quietly as though nothing had happened.

Even though the *Wainai* is peculiarly an Ekari custom, it has been taken up by some of the Migani people where clans of the two tribes living about the lakes have been together or in close contact. In the village of Itodah, which consists of a mixture of both tribes, de Bruijn saw the dance performed by a Migani—a brother of Soalekigi.

The chief wished the people to honour the *Kontolulle* by presenting him with a number of pigs. Soalekigi already had given one, but the Ekaris were not so anxious to follow his example. It was then that Soalekigi's brother bounded up and gave a spirited performance of the *Wainai*, expressing his annoyance with the Ekari people by means of their own dance.

De Bruijn stayed with Soalekigi for four days. He liked the place and the people, and it was a joy to him to climb the mountain-side, where in solitude he could sit and ponder

and look down upon the pretty little tree-shaded village with its huts arranged round the neat communal square, on one side of which stood Soalekigi's house, and in front of which rose the flagstaff erected by Dr. Cator two years earlier. From the pole still fluttered the now colourless and tattered remains of the Dutch flag which Cator had nailed to the pole.

Pleasant as this sojourn was, de Bruijn did not ponder for long; the trail and the object of the expedition still lay ahead. But it was a much larger party that moved out of Itodah, for Soalekigi took with him four wives and three daughters and two brothers; in fact, all his relatives in the village, except one lone woman, joined up with the expedition. This, in itself, was an innovation, because though family ties are very strong and the men frequently take their wives and children with them on long journeys, none of the women of the mountain regions had ever visited the coast.

South of Itodah, where the country was not well populated, they had to cut a new trail. It was hard going, hacking their path through the jungle, and ahead lay more jungle—always jungle, jungle, jungle—slippery walking downhill, and so steep that they had to use felled trees to build stairways to go down. In eight hours they descended 4,200 feet. It was, of course, impossible as a new trail for carrying supplies. That idea had to be abandoned, but nevertheless de Bruijn carried on with the expedition.

Late one afternoon they made camp in a thickly timbered region and, as night fell about them, all the wood shone like silver with a phosphorescent light. It lay on the trunks and fallen logs, a soft luminous glow in the darkness, with the unreality of another world.

They moved south, coming lower and lower, and the days became hotter and hotter, and eventually they arrived at Orawja. Then, in the crisp early morning, while it was still dark, they took the canoes and moved quietly down the river.

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With the first break of dawn de Bruijn saw one of the loveliest sights he had ever witnessed; it stirred him so deeply that, whenever he made that journey again, he tried to plan it so that he could leave Orawja with the break of day. His one complaint in the mountain ranges was of the absence of birds.

"The quiet, mysterious brooding of the mountains always worried me," he said. "I missed the bird life."

Now, as they moved quietly down the river, without using the paddles, the morning broke. The dark banks and lagoons gradually began to take shape in the coming light. They seemed to stir and become alive with a twittering and chirping that swelled in chorus.

A splash of pink appeared as the ibis stretched his wings, wood pigeons billed and cooed as they preened themselves, parrots moved like flashes of jewels, more beautiful because they were living things, and, high above, the cockatoos gave strident voice. Then a larger shape moved, something black and gold, and the hornbill began his day—the hornbill, who grows a ring on his beak each year, until the seventh appears—and with a great flapping, cracking noise of wings flies away, and the younger birds follow him to some unknown destination "to the last scene of all." It is said that no hornbill has ever been seen with more than seven rings.

And above this pæan of praise to the morning sun presently is heard a loud whirring sound, as dark clouds sweep across the sky and come to rest like black rags festooned in the trees. The flying foxes have returned from their nocturnal raids.

The canoes move downstream, winding into the hot glare of the day and the heavy blanket of humidity that lies over Oeta.

## 6

*Le Roux visits the lakes—Explorateur's Bivak—Closing down the Post—Return to Enarotali—Thea, the white pig—Ekari cunning and shyness.*

REPORTS FROM the Wissel Lakes district began to attract attention at headquarters. In June 1939, an expedition, under the auspices of the Royal Netherlands Geographical Society, and the leadership of C. C. F. M. le Roux, from Leiden, made a trip into the central mountains, and remained there until November of that year. During their stay they were supplied by two Royal Netherlands Navy Fokker sea-planes.

When le Roux was making his plans at Enarotali, he asked de Bruijn for a reliable guide, and naturally Soalekigi was chosen, but when the proposition was put to him the old chief caused some consternation in the camp by flatly refusing to go. Under the circumstances, perhaps it was only natural that le Roux should think that the District Officer was playing a double game and quietly dissuading Soalekigi so as to keep him for himself. Actually the whole question rested with Soalekigi, and with him it was merely a matter of his sympathies and antipathies. He would do anything for the *Kontolulle* personally, but as for le Roux, he just did not like him, and that was that. De Bruijn tried to persuade him to change his mind; he and le Roux both offered presents of cowries, axes, and knives, but the old man remained adamant, and in the end le Roux had to find someone else.

The Geographical party first made an expedition into the



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Kebomoeka region, north of Lake Paniai, to make surveys and calculations, but the Kebo people did not like intruders in their territory, and proved to be very difficult. Eventually they gave force to their views by shooting arrows on the party, who had to withdraw and return to Enarotali. The geological member of the expedition left soon after for Amboina, and consequently, as no one else has undertaken the work, no geological survey of the Wissel Lakes locality has been made.

Le Roux, after his failure in the Kebomoeka, turned his interests elsewhere, and made a successful expedition to the north-east, following the route previously taken by de Bruijn as far as Zanepa. From this point le Roux and his party entered entirely new territory, crossing the Kemaboe River and proceeding until they reached the village of Hitalipa, a few miles before the Delo Canyon. He looked at this wild country about the great canyon and thought it to be impassable, and made no attempt to go farther. Actually it was not far from a point he had reached when, thirteen years before, in 1926, he had accompanied another expedition from the north coast to the upper Rouffaer River, and had reached *Explorateur's Bivak*, on the far (eastern) side of the canyon. Thus this district around the Delo, and between the western and eastern points of le Roux's two expeditions, was still unexplored, and remained so until October 1943, when de Bruijn sent two members of his own party, Joseph the *Bestuursassistent*, and Tumahu the carpenter, both Amboinese boys, with three members of his bodyguard and some Daoewa men as carriers, to explore the unknown. It was an extremely difficult journey, and to have achieved it, as they did, shows the stamina, the fearlessness, and the keenness of the men whom the District Officer had chosen to support him. Joseph, as leader of the party, looked a frail little lad; he was then only about twenty-one years of age, full of fun, and as lively as a cricket; but behind this boyish-

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ness lay a loyalty and devotion to his *Kontolulle* that gave him untold courage and the power to carry out his responsibilities.

When these boys came to the Delo where the river roared into the gorge they found themselves between great walls of rock that rose sheer to 1,500 feet or more. Clearly no one could pass that way, so they retraced their steps and climbed 3,000 feet to the top of the range. When they came down on the other side they found themselves near *Explorateur's Bivak* (see "Explorer's Camp" on back end-paper map).

So these two young Amboinese boys, after having crossed this terrible unknown country, made the first civilized contact with *Explorateur's Bivak* for seventeen years. The only signs they found of the previous occupation were a few rusty tins and some empty cartridge cases. They had, however, bridged the gap between the west and the east. It was no longer unknown, and the work they did proved of inestimable value before another twelve months had passed, when it became necessary for the whole party to move through that country with very dire need of knowledge of what it held.

Le Roux completed his expedition in November 1939, and returned to Leiden early in the following year. This expedition will be described in detail elsewhere.

During this period de Bruijn suffered from recurring attacks of malaria and dysentery, both of which had affected him when at the coast. Attacks of malaria came almost every month and dysentery about every three months. When the two occurred at the same time they were very weakening, and his already slender body began to show the strain. On one occasion a rumour had gone forth that he was ill; it happened to be a false rumour, but it reached Soalekigi away in Itodah. The old chief was very upset, and gathering together his wives and children, he promptly walked them all into Enarotali to enquire after the welfare of his beloved *Memoeroe*. Both men were deeply moved, and Soalekigi

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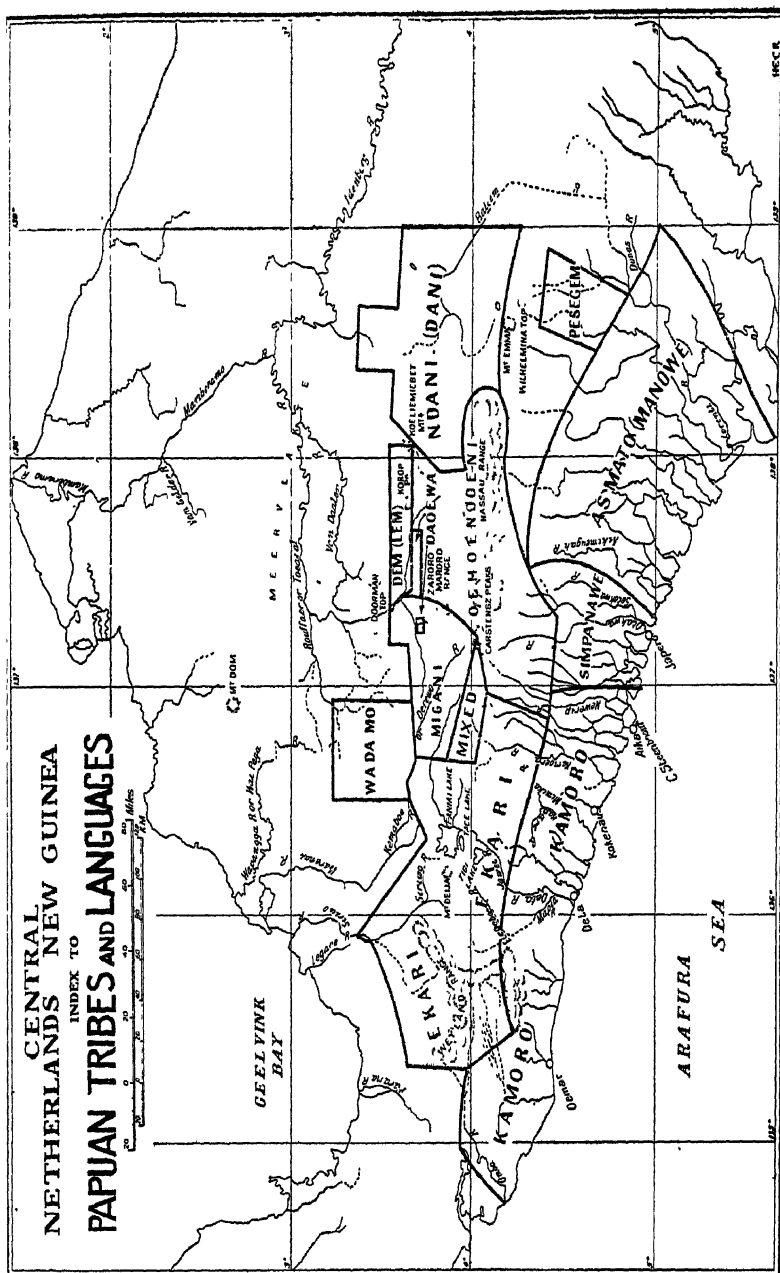
openly cried with emotion. Soon after this the attacks became worse and more frequent, and de Bruijn went to Java for a month's sick leave, where he had treatment that cured both complaints. He was never troubled with them again.

Weakebo, with one of his sons, and a son of Soalekigi and two other boys, went with de Bruijn as far as Amboina, with the object of staying at the agricultural school at Laha, on the far side of the bay, where they might learn something of the methods of the outside world. It was a great adventure for the boys, but Weakebo was not so pleased. He had been at Laha only a day or so when, walking through the gardens, a coconut fell on his head. Poor Weakebo never had a great deal of dignity, but all he had was ruffled by this insult, and he was so angry that he demanded to be sent back to Amboina at once. It was no use laughing or cajoling or sympathizing; nothing would appease his wrath. He simply would not stay in this place to be treated like that. They all returned to the Lakes with de Bruijn a month later. The boys were full of enthusiasm, and had no complaints—but then, they had not been hit on the head.

The Resident Magistrate had instructed de Bruijn to make an expedition to the east of the lakes beyond the point reached by le Roux a few months earlier. He set out in May, again accompanied by the faithful Soalekigi. Dr. Culley, an American medical missionary who visited New Guinea as a guest of the Government, also went with the party. They had only gone as far as the second base camp when news came of Germany's attack on Holland, and the radio operator at Enarotali reported that instructions had come to close the Post. It was a hard blow.

The *Kontolulle* brought the party back to the lakes and broke the news to the people, and for days they wandered about very sad and dejected, then they came to him and asked to be allowed to have a farewell feast in his honour.

On the 6th June de Bruijn called them all together and



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hoisted the Dutch flag on the pole before his hut, and he spoke to them and told them how happy he had been, and how sad he was at having to leave such good friends. They listened to him with tears rolling down their faces.

"But," he said, "I shall return again soon. By the time the colours have faded from this flag I shall return to you."

Then they all joined in the feast, and after that danced together far into the night.

Next day all supplies and equipment were locked up in the Barracks, otherwise everything was left as it had been. There was a final word of caution to the people. They were warned not to destroy or steal anything. Then with a heavy heart he left them and went to Ceram. He had been at the lakes only eighteen months, and in that time had not only come to know them as his friends, but had made his life a part of theirs. Was all his work to go for naught? He had been born with a *helm* on his head; perhaps after all there was something in the ancient belief. What had prompted him to say he would soon return?

After four months in Ceram, to his intense joy the Government decided to reopen the Post at Wissel Lakes, and by early November, happy and eager, he was again walking over the now familiar trail from the coast. On the way up from Orawja he met a party of Ekaris and sent them with a message to Weakebo.

"Tell Weakebo that I am coming," he said. "He may not believe you at first, so give him these large cowries. He will know I sent them, and ask him to come to meet me. I am anxious to see Weakebo again."

Two days later a party of sixty carriers came towards him along the trail, led by Weakebo.

"*Merah, Merah* (greetings to the white man)," they shouted.

"*Merah, Merah*," and Weakebo came bounding forward to meet him, and the chief, greatly pleased and excited, in-

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sisted that before going on to the lakes the whole party should be entertained at his village. And so they went into Jaba for a wonderful reunion. A big feast was held, and Weakebo, always willing to be up and talking, made an emotional speech of welcome, to which de Bruijn had to reply; it was a very friendly, happy party.

The shrewd Weakebo, who never lost an opportunity, saw that this would be a good occasion to press a point. Would it not be a good idea, he suggested, if the *Kontolulle* would appoint a *Bestuursassistent* to the village of Jaba. Yes, the *Kontolulle* thought so too. In fact, he had thought so for some time, and already had discussed the question with the Resident Magistrate. It had many advantages, but he was not unaware that Weakebo saw it would bring more people to Jaba and thus many more cowries to his village.

As de Bruijn walked into Enarotali a happy throng came out to meet him, and gathered around him, shouting their greetings, and singing and dancing. He paused before his hut. Yes, there was the flag still flying at the head of the pole. It was battered and torn, and nearly white: the last vestige of colour had almost faded out.

Everything was as he had left it: only one glass window and two ducks were missing, which might have been accidental, but was put down to the frailties of human nature. Everywhere he went he found the people jubilant at his return and saying to one another:

"The *Kontolulle* has come. The *Kontolulle* keeps his word."

But when their rejoicing had died down they had a sad story to tell.

"Sir," they said. "It has not rained for many weeks. Our gardens are dried up and all our vegetables and sweet potatoes are dying, and we are short of food. When will it rain again?"

It was so. Even the waters of the lake had receded, and

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where he had never seen a strip of beach there was now a width of 600-700 feet of dry land. He looked wisely and thoughtfully at the mountains, and up at the sky, and answered them:

"It will rain in three days from now."

On the third day it rained, and again all the people nearly went mad with rejoicing.

"The *Kontolulle* keeps his word," they cried.

"Our *Kontolulle* is a great man," and the young man who was the great *Kontolulle* retired to his hut with a smile, wondering what good fortune had prompted him to name the third day.

To everyone's satisfaction all the imported animals had proved to be a good proposition, especially the pigs. Little white piglets were plentiful, for their mothers had delivered litters of seven and nine at a time. The people took great care of them, and at night penned them in their own huts, at the far end beyond the central fireplace, and the women took the little ones and slept with them to keep them warm. They did not, however, suckle them, as do the coastal people, but they gave them every other attention. Pig-breeding is one of the most important things in their village life and trade; they would rather possess one pig than two goats.

Many of the pigs became very tame, especially the castrated ones, for both the Ekari and the Migani people know how to operate on the pigs, even though, for a grown-up animal, it must be an extremely painful business. It is usually done to pigs who show signs of wanderlust and begin to stray into the woods, but after the operation they remain in the village and become tame and are treated as domestic pets. Then they can roam at will, except, of course, in the gardens, which now had to be fenced. These could be watched during the day and the animals driven off, but the pigs also made nocturnal raids, because their passion for sweet potatoes was both fierce and enduring.

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One of the tame pigs was extraordinarily fat. It had been given by the people to Sitanalla, the *Bestuursassistent*, when it was very young. He named it "Wissel," which the people pronounced "Witero." Later, a Zonggonao boy from Koegapa came to help in the kitchen, by chopping wood, washing up, etc., and incidentally picking up titbits and morsels. When the boy arrived he was very thin, but his "kitchen work" so improved his condition that he grew as fat as the pig, so he too became known as "Wissel" or "Witero."

From the many animals de Bruijn had received as presents, he selected some for himself and gave the others away. All his own pigs, with an impish humour that might not have been appreciated in some quarters, he named after his former girl friends; there were quite a number, and the animals always answered to their names. One was a lovely white sow; her name was Thea, and she loved to be petted. It became Thea's habit, whenever she wanted a little attention, to come to de Bruijn's hut, and with a fore-leg knock at the door. It was opened to her, and she would come in and lie on the floor at his feet to have her back scratched. Thea knew no greater joy than this, unless it was, perhaps, the sweet potato with which she was rewarded before she went home. Evening after evening this happened, until it became a part of the day's routine.

One day Thea did not come. De Bruijn went out and called her: there was no response. He made enquiries. No, no one had seen Thea all day. General consternation set in, and all the camp was looking and calling for Thea. They called and searched, but she was not to be found anywhere, and as the days went by it was concluded that she had heard the call of the wild and was an abandoned female.

Ten days, perhaps a fortnight, passed. Then one night, at about 10 p.m., while de Bruijn was sitting reading by the light of his pump lamp, there was a knock at the door.



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"Come in." No one came in, but the knocking was repeated.

"Come in." Still no response, and still the knocking. De Bruijn got up and opened the door.

"And there," he said, "stood Thea, with nine little white piglets all asking for food. It was a lovely sight. They all came into my hut and Thea had her back scratched, and I gave her some sweet potatoes, after which she and her family departed.

"Two nights after that the same thing happened again. Thea and all her children came to supper, and after that, as the little ones grew, Thea resumed her normal habits.

"But Thea had a sad end." De Bruijn continued the story. "Although the big vegetable garden was fenced, somehow or other some pigs always got in at night and made havoc amongst the sweet potatoes: they seldom touched anything else. We could not afford this, so I gave orders to the police to set a watch for the marauders. Two pigs were shot, and we thought that was the end of the trouble.

"Next day I went out on a short patrol, and when I came back I could see, as soon as I entered the camp, that something had gone wrong. The police looked at each other and watched me. They seemed to be afraid. I said:

" 'What has happened?' Then one of the police came forward; he looked so sad.

" 'Oh, sir,' he said. 'Oh, sir. Please do not be angry with me. A dreadful thing has happened.'

" 'What have you done? Whatever is the matter that you are so upset?'

" 'Oh, sir, oh, sir, do not be angry with me; I only did as you told me. One night I saw a pig amongst the sweet potatoes, and I shot it. I only obeyed your orders. But, sir, the pig was Thea.'

"Of course we were all very sad about it," concluded de Bruijn, "and I missed Thea very much: she was a lovely pig."

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The *Kontolulle's* return to the lakes naturally meant a resumption of trading with the people. One thing was in his favour: he now had plenty of cowrie shells. While he was at Ceram he had seen hundreds, even thousands, of nice white cowries lying on the beaches, and he encouraged the local people to collect them for him, at a payment of one cent for every four shells. Never had so much money been lying about. The Papuans, particularly the *Ekaris* living in the locality of the lakes, were hungry for wealth, and they showed an eagerness and a cunning in their trading quite contrary to the nature of the higher-principled *Miganis*.

At the time when de Bruijn returned to *Enarotali*, and the gardens had suffered from drought, there were still a few tomatoes on the vines. For want of rain they were very small, mostly about the size of a nut, but they had a very full flavour, and the people knew the *Kontolulle* was fond of them. After a time there were no more, and a good source of trading was cut off, because de Bruijn had always paid for them in cowries.

One day a man came to him and asked him if he wanted to buy some tomatoes, at the same time holding in his hands a bundle of fresh green leaves, and parting them showed a glimpse of nice red fruit.

"Yes, I'll buy them. Put them down there," said de Bruijn, and he paid the man, who went away cheerily.

During the day the cook-boy came in full of complaints.

"Sir," he said. "These tomatoes are not good. They are very bitter and I cannot make nice soup with them."

"Take them away," he was told. "They are quite fresh; I bought them only this morning. I want soup for dinner, and see it is good."

Dinner-time came and soup was served, but as the boy had said, it was very bitter, and the taste was horrible.

"Bring me some of those tomatoes, and let me see them." They were brought in, and de Bruijn saw that, instead of

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tomatoes, he had been sold the wild bitter fruit of the jungle.

Next day the same man came back to sell some more.

"Put them down there," and de Bruijn went inside as though to get cowries. Instead he took a brushful of wet paint.

"Come here." The man came forward, and instead of cowries he received two swipes of paint across his face.

No more jungle fruit was offered for sale, but the people had great fun jeering at the man who carried the smears on his face for nearly a week.

A task de Bruijn set himself at this time, and a far from easy one, was to make some sort of census of the population. The work of registering these people had been commenced by van Eechoud, but he had no more than started a census when he had to leave Enarotali. The people have such a horror of revealing their names that even in ordinary daily conversation they almost invariably addressed each other as "friend." Particularly is this so among the Ekaris, some of whom were members of de Bruijn's bodyguard, and even after five years he did not know their correct names. They simply refused to tell, for merely to utter their names, they were sure, would bring them bad luck. When they were asked, they replied with the first thing that came to mind, and as van Eechoud had not known the language very well, his register showed some quaint names.

"What is your name?" and the reply, put down in Migani or Ekari, "I don't know." Another would say, "I have just told you," and another, "I haven't any," or any other answer that occurred to them on the spur of the moment. In spite of these difficulties, in the course of time some 15,000 people living in the lakes district were registered, but in other valleys no attempt at any sort of registration has yet been made, and the number of people living there is still entirely a matter of conjecture. Out on patrols or expeditions it was quite impossible to do any of this work: there just wasn't time.

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December 1940 was an important month in the history of the Post. It saw the inauguration of a weekly plane service by the K.N.I.L.M. from Babo to Enarotali, and the regular flow of supplies brought in by a Grumman Amphibian machine. In the same month the Netherlands Indies Public Works Department sent a patrol to the lakes to survey a motor road from Orawja to Enarotali, so that supplies could come in that way without the labour and difficulty of carriers. The party put in eight months' work on this survey, and pegged the route for a distance of about fifty miles—as the crow flies it is only about thirty-five miles—and across the range at 6,300 feet, and then down to the lakes at approximately 5,000 feet above sea-level. The highest point on this route was about three and a half hours' walking over the winding mountain trail at the rate of one mile per hour. The estimated cost of the road was set down as at approximately £3,500 per kilometre. It was a great project, which unfortunately subsequent events caused to be abandoned, at least temporarily.

*Trouble with the Kebo people—A skirmish—Peace-making  
—Treating the wounded.*

FOR SOME time trouble had been brewing with an Ekari tribe in the Kebo region, to the north-east of Lake Paniai. The first experience of it had been in van Eechoud's time, when he sent his *Bestuursassistent* to carry out a registration of the people. When he reached the valley he found himself surrounded by unfriendly people and threatened with arrows, so, as the district was entirely new to him, he discreetly withdrew. Van Eechoud made no further attempt to contact the Kebos.

The Geographical Society, in June 1939, had had the same *Bestuursassistent* as a member of the party, and again this man tried to enter the Kebo region. Again he had to withdraw.

When de Bruijn went to the lakes he tried to get in touch with the Kebo people through other friendly tribes, but without success. He then sent some of his own Papuans over, only to find once more that retirement was advisable.

The Kebo people, encouraged by their success, became more and more troublesome, and made proud boasts that the District Officer was afraid of them. Their stories were repeated frequently until there was a danger of disturbing the peace of the friendly tribes. Then, further emboldened, they said: "If the *Kontolulle* does not come himself, it will prove that he is afraid, and then we will come to his Post." The gauntlet was down. Over at Amboina the Resident Magistrate studied his District Officer's report. He was a

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cautious man and wished to avoid a disturbance. The position was put to him, pointing out that if something was not done the whole of the exploration work was in danger. Then the Resident Magistrate agreed and gave permission for the challenge to be accepted.

Before de Bruijn started out on the job he held a conference with other clans to decide who should go. To his astonishment and pleasure some two hundred men offered, a number of whom were members of the offending clan. There was not nearly enough transport for all these people, so thirty-five Papuans were selected, armed with bows and arrows, and were attached to the District Officer's own party of fifteen police boys, who carried guns. Then the trouble was to distinguish these Papuans from the enemy, so they were provided with white head-bands, which were conspicuous as the dark heads popped up in the long grass. The police boys were in their uniform of breeches, tunic, and bamboo hat.

At 6 a.m. one morning a 24-foot motor-boat and one smaller launch bearing the attacking party set out across Lake Paniai. It took an hour and a half to reach the opposite shore, and when eventually they landed at the mouth of the Waneiwo River they found themselves on flat, marshy, and impassable ground.

Telling the story, de Bruijn said: "From afar off, over a distance of some two or three miles came an awful din, which we knew to be the singing and war cries of the Kebo people. It was a stirring sound. Suddenly the noise stopped. Everything was quiet. We saw and heard nothing."

As it was impossible to cross the swamp, they decided to go back to the boats and make another landing near a small river a little to the east, and thus approach the village by a direct route. When they were about 300 feet from the shore, more shouting was heard. The village people had advanced

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unseen and unheard through the long swamp grass. They were jubilant, because they thought the party was afraid and withdrawing. Yelling wildly they came out of hiding, some three hundred or four hundred strong, their women-folk with them, acting as ammunition carriers and supplying the men with arrows. The Kebos shot fiercely, but the distance was too great and their arrows fell short.

A landing here was hopeless, so the party turned again and came back to their original landing site. They got ashore, and dividing the patrol, went round the two sides of the marsh, firing a few warning shots as they went along. On one side the patrol met with a good deal of trouble, but the Papuans fought steadily and the enemy could not hold them and retired to the village. The leader of this disturbance was a Kebo chief who danced and dashed about so frantically that it was almost impossible to fire a shot or to shoot an arrow at him, but finally one got home, and when he fell the others retired in confusion and hasty flight. During this fight six Papuans were killed.

When the District Officer's party reached the village the place was a shambles. The Papuans who till now had been so steady were running riot, setting fire to the houses and killing the pigs. Fierce-looking white-banded figures, covered with blood, carried off the carcasses or ran about with live and very noisy piglets in their arms. De Bruijn and his men soon put a stop to that, and all burning and killing ceased immediately. If the whole village had been burned out and the people had had nothing left, that would have defeated his object. He was not there to kill and burn and loot, but to maintain order. To all intents and purposes the battle was over and the Kebo people had learned that he was not afraid. The time had come to make peace, and he called to them to send a man over to him, but the Kebo had retired completely, and the whole party called and shouted for nearly an hour, until every man was hoarse, before anyone appeared. Finally,

one much-subdued Kebo warrior came forward. His manner brightened considerably when he was offered presents of shells and axes, and told to take word back that the Kebo people were to come to Enarotali in two days' time to make peace. The man went back very happy and apparently with such a favourable report that others came. They also received presents and were sent back as ambassadors. Then the party returned to Enarotali, carrying a much heavier load, with wriggling pigs and bloody carcasses. The Post was reached at 6 p.m. It had been just a twelve hours' skirmish.

There was a lot of rejoicing that night when the pigs were roasted and a victory feast held. All the next day the victors were busy receiving countless visitors who came to hear the news.

On the second day the Kebo people came in a great procession: men, women, and children, three hundred of them all told, and they brought lots of pigs with them. Others came in from surrounding villages too to offer their congratulations, or to join in the fun. With some ceremony the vanquished Kebo people solemnly presented the District Officer with seventeen pigs and quantities of cowrie shells. It had been his first experience of native warfare, and he did not then know that the giving of presents was the recognized way of making peace. He gave them presents in return, and friendly relations were established, but the business was not yet over; people from all the other villages also brought gifts—spoils to the conqueror—so that by the end of the first week he had received seventy-six pigs. Never had so many pigs been seen in Enarotali before; big ones and little ones, black and white, were everywhere. Then the chiefs got together and called a meeting of all the people, and many of them made speeches. The chiefs, in particular, held forth at great length, and de Bruijn had to reply. For a whole day the orators had their way. The *Kontolulle's* stocks were very high. When presents were handed out to the white-banded



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Papuans for their services, there was a grave danger of the party beginning all over again.

Before the people left for their homes de Bruijn instructed the Kebos to send their wounded to him for treatment, and after five days they came. There were two bad cases. One man was shot in the arm, and he had been treating it himself, in his own fashion, with bandages of leaves. The wound was filthy and the flesh rotted, so the arm had to be amputated by the doctor at the Post. Another was wounded in the leg, and he was sent by plane to the hospital at Babo for treatment. Another Papuan went with him, so that the wounded man should not be afraid or lonely amongst strange people. Both were in their native undress, wearing only the *koteka*, and all Babo turned out to see these strange wild people from the lakes. They were a great success, and it was all very good propaganda. After three months they both returned to the Post.

There is a sequel to this story: the man whose arm had been amputated later came to the District Officer and asked for a payment in cowrie shells as compensation. The loss of an arm prevented him from marrying!

*Flight over the Baliem—Land expedition to Beura and Ielop—Soalekigi's friendship—Reception by the people—Burial customs—War clouds.*

"SOALEKIGI."

"*Memoeroe.*"

"*Alegamè*, I am going to make a trip to the east, far beyond Zanepa, far out to the land of the mysterious Ndani to Ielop, towards the valley of the Baliem. Will you come with me?"

"*Memoeroe*, I will come. Much of that country is very difficult. I have heard there are no people in the valley of the Wangbe, and that all the gardens and villages are deserted. In much of the country, it is said, there are no people at all. It will not be easy for you, *Memoeroe*, and it will be a long journey. Yes, I will come. Gladly will I come. When do we leave?"

"First of all, *Alegamè*, before we make the trip by land, a plane is coming to the lakes. In it I shall fly over the country, far out over the valley of the Baliem. I would like you to come with me in the plane. You have never been in a plane, *Alegamè*, it will be a great adventure for you."

"I will come with you. The people will be very excited. They will call us *Hoekomanggaramè*, the men who have come by plane. Yes, it will be a great adventure. You will need me, *Memoeroe*, I could not let you go alone."

And so a pilot and a radio operator brought a K.N.I.L.M. plane to Lake Paniai, and on the 15th and 29th May, 1941, reconnaissance flights were made. Soalekigi was very excited

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and enthusiastic. The District Officer watched him closely; there was no sign of fear. The man accepted it as he accepted everything else. They flew far out over the unexplored mountain ranges, over uninhabitable valleys and deserted villages, over the great Baliem Valley to the mountains of the eternal snows. It was a most thrilling flight, high in the clouds above the sunlit snow, low in the valleys of untold mysteries, over the brooding mountains where often the noise of the plane was the only sound to break a silence of centuries.

The plane twisted and turned, this way and that; everything was hidden by clouds. In the cockpit Soalekigi crouched between the pilot and de Bruijn, peering eagerly in every direction.

"Where are we, *Alegamè*? In which direction is Enarotali?"

"Enarotali is far over there, *Memoeroe*," said the old man, pointing, and a check up with the pilot showed he was right.

When the Archbold expedition (see *Results of the Archbold Expeditions, No. 41, Summary of the 1938-1939 New Guinea Expedition, by Richard Archbold, A.L. Rand, and L. J. Brass*, New York, 26th June 1942) made exploration flights and patrols to Central New Guinea between the Idenburg River and Wilhelmina Peak south of Lake Habbema, they came upon many fine valleys, most of which were thickly populated and densely cultivated. The greatest of these valleys was the Baliem, which they named the Grand Valley. It appears, from descriptions given, that this is identical with the so-called "Shangri-la," where an American plane crashed in May 1945.

Archbold describes the Grand Valley as being about fifty miles long and up to twelve and a half miles wide, surrounded by perpetually snow-capped mountains. The bottom elevation is about 5,000 to 5,500 feet. "It presents a picturesque appearance, its stockaded villages and neatly

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patterned gardens bearing testimony to the fertility of the alluvial flats and to their capacity to support one of the most densely populated areas of all New Guinea. An estimate of 60,000 people is probably conservative; the figure is more in the vicinity of 100,000."

Archbold flew over the Baliem Valley, and around the Wilhelmina area, and it was supposed that in this region the great Baliem River had its source. He did not go any farther west. Had he done so he would have seen from his Catalina the river extending far away to the west.

Thus it fell to de Bruijn, three years later, to make one of the most important discoveries in Central New Guinea. From the air, as they flew over the Koelimbet, or de Burcht (Castle) Range he saw a great river winding away to the east, its source being about 100 miles from Enarotali. From information he had received he thought this might be the Baliem, and watched its course closely as it flowed towards the Great Valley. At one time they lost sight of it completely. The reason for this was discovered later. In November 1943 a special N.E.F.I.S. (Netherlands East Indies Forces Intelligence Service) mission, under van Eechoud, made flights over the source of the Baliem, and found that at one point the river disappears completely underground, emerging again about twenty miles distant. Truly this strange country handsomely rewards those who devote themselves to its exploration.

When the reconnaissance flights were ended the K.N.I.L.M. plane left the lakes. (In December of that year the pilot and radio operator, in the same plane, were shot down over Timor.)

De Bruijn told Soalekigi that the expedition would leave Enarotali on the 9th June, and gave him a "calendar" (a *poetoe*) in the native fashion of a piece of rattan with a number of knots tied in it. Each day a knot is undone, until the final one represents the day fixed for the event. Soalekigi

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took his *poetoe* and departed to his home at Itodah, where one of his wives was about to give birth to another child. With these people family ties are very strong, and it is a most unusual thing for any man to leave his village while his wife is pregnant. Soalekigi, therefore, had his domestic responsibilities on his mind.

The party left on the appointed day, the 9th June 1941, but Soalekigi was not with them. It was the only occasion on which de Bruijn knew him to fail. Two days later there was a commotion on the trail as a man came racing up behind them. Soalekigi had arrived. All was well.

One feature about this expedition was that it was the first time de Bruijn had used Aimaroes from Vogelkop and Miganis as carriers. Coolies had been imported from Teminaboean, in the southern part of the Vogelkop area in western New Guinea, but these had not been medically examined before they left, and nine were sent back unfit. The object in using these imported men was to form a nucleus of carriers who would not desert. Not knowing the country and without supplies, they had no alternative other than to remain with the party. On the other hand, the usefulness of the Miganis lay in the fact that they were in their own country and could live off it, thus considerably reducing the quantity of supplies that had to be carried. If they deserted there would still remain the Vogelkop people to carry on. After seven days' journeying the Miganis were paid off and a new lot recruited. They acquitted themselves well, particularly as they had never served as carriers before, and their services were paid for as usual in axes and cowrie shells.

They followed their old trail as far as Zanepa and continued on, passing to the south of the Delo Canyon, into a strange country of new people, new languages, new habits and customs. Throughout all this journey, as on subsequent occasions, de Bruijn made voluminous social anthropological notes. It is one of the tragedies of war that all these notes, up

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to as late as 1943, had to be destroyed. There were four four-gallon tins full of them; material which had never before been collected. All were burned; some have been lost to the world for all time.

It was when the party made camp at Doengoel, beyond Wanerep, that they received their greatest welcome. A discoloured shale river flows through this valley along a bed 160 feet wide, but the river itself is only 16 feet across; close by it was spanned by a rattan bridge. Here they made camp, and had not been there long before visitors arrived to inspect the party; then more came, and more. From nearby villages they poured in, friendly, laughing, singing people, bringing with them quantities of food and many pigs, which were presented to de Bruijn. Still they came, and for ten days the camp was a wild scene of feasting and rejoicing. Some of the men wore magnificent head-dresses trimmed with fur and feathers and the gorgeous plumes of the bird of paradise. Then the party broke camp, taking to the trail once more, and all the people came with them. Three hundred roamed over the hillsides and plains. They were not still for a moment; dancing and prancing about in their enthusiasm, they laid bare everything before them. It looked as if a horde of elephants had passed by. From village to village, from one hill to the next, the welcome and rejoicing were taken up.

All this time Soalekigi, a very proud man, watched over the *Kontolulle*. By day he carried de Bruijn's rifle and water-bottle: the only thing Soalekigi would allow the younger man to carry was his camera.

At night, while they slept, often all together on a raised platform, it was Soalekigi who always lay next to de Bruijn. It was the older man's privilege and self-appointed right to guard *Memoeroe*, and woe betide anyone who tried to usurp his position. And as they lay there, with the long night before them, and only the light of the fire, they would talk

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for a long time, each learning the ways of the other and of his people.

"What manner of life do Western people live?" Soalekigi would ask.

"Do you have a clan to make shoes, and another to build houses? Is there another to make clothes? Do the men of one clan marry women of the same clan, a thing which is forbidden among the Miganis?" and so on. In his thirst for knowledge he would ask more and more questions, then patiently and intelligently he would listen to the stories of the *Kontolulle*.

They talked of many things, and their friendship grew until it became not that of an old man guarding the younger, not a matter of loyalty and devotion, but a companionship deep and vital. Wherever you look in the story of native races and in the history of administration of coloured peoples, you may never find its like. On the one hand is the polished student, imbued with intellect, knowledge, poetic feeling, a lover of the arts, in love with life; on the other the neolithic Papuan, a member of one of the most primitive tribes on the face of the earth, who knew no art other than that of cutting and trading a stone axe. From the very extremes of civilization and culture these two men found a common level in the naturalness and simplicity, the downright honesty of each other, which was the substance of their greatness.

In the western part of the central mountains it is the custom of the people to lay their dead on platforms where the bodies are left to rot, and at a later point de Bruijn tells of his observations on this custom. Now, in this new country of the east, they found things very different, and one of the first he noticed was that the dead were cremated. This, to him, was most interesting, because the original idea of cremation is thought to have come from Hindu influence, and, so far as is known, there is no other sign of Hindu influence

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among these eastern-central mountain tribes. It is even possible that their rite of cremation antedates that of the Hindu. Their cremation grounds are clearly marked by the erection of a pole close by the spot. In the instance of a man, his penis tube is stuck on the pole; when the deceased is a woman, her grass skirt is hung there. After the cremation the top of the pole is usually covered with grass, resembling hair, over which is placed a head net such as they wear. Lower down, in the natural position as they would be on the human body, is placed the penis tube, or the woman's skirt. From a distance these poles, thus decorated, look like figures, and they may remain there long after the ashes and any other signs of the cremation have disappeared.

Another difference in the customs of these people is to be seen in their houses. Instead of the western square dwellings, there are now round huts like beehives; only occasionally is an oblong building seen, and this is always reserved for feasts and ceremonies. Otherwise living conditions are much the same; there is the open fire around which the people sleep, with the pigs on the outer circle.

For a long time there had existed amongst the people of the central mountains a legend about a race of white Papuans with tails, who were supposed to exist in a region many days' travelling far to the east. The story goes that long ago a white tribe of Ndani or Manauku migrated to another region, and the Ndani people have since journeyed miles and miles to find the offspring of their white brethren. De Bruijn tried to solve this story, and was told by the Oehoendoeni tribe, whose territory lies between that of the Moni and the Ndani, that these people are not white at all, but are black Papuans who wear long hair. They may too have a strip of prepared bark attached to a waist string and falling between the buttocks, thus giving the impression of a tail. It is conceivable that some clan has travelled farther towards the border, and there gathered some story of a white man having



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been seen. From these things the legend appears to have grown and become embellished as it has been handed down.

Incidentally, during this trip to Beura and Ielop, de Bruijn made a word list of three different Papuan languages. In the Beura region, the chief of one of the villages presented the *Kontolulle* with a little pig. The old man—he was about seventy—was so filled with self-importance at being allowed this privilege, that he tried to prevent anyone else coming near de Bruijn. The people tried to gather round him, but each time they came near the chief drove them back, saying: "Go away. He is *my* friend. Go away, all of you."

When the party reached Jilorong, on the Ielorong River of the Ielop valley, the guides and carriers became restless, and were afraid their leader would want to press on into the valley of the Baliem. From the people here he learned that the river he had seen flowing eastward from the Koelimbet range was the Baliem. He was right in his previous contention that he had discovered its source. All sorts of horrible stories had come from that region and every superstitious fear in them was aroused. Clearly the carriers did not want to go on, and even Soalekigi joined voice with them.

"It is not right for you to go into that country," he told de Bruijn. "It is a terrible land, full of danger and disease.

"I have seen," he continued, "men brought from that country whose bodies have been swollen, and they died. The carriers will desert you, and those who do not will die. You cannot go."

De Bruijn did not go, but there were reasons other than the persuasion of Soalekigi. Before the expedition had set out from Enarotali the war clouds were coming closer, and to continue the journey on foot would have meant too long away from the Post. Even as it was, by the time he got back he would have been away two months, and all that time without communication of any sort.

It was the 7th August, 1941, when the party returned to

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Enarotali. During their absence Russia had been invaded and Indo-China occupied.

The people knew nothing of this cloud hanging over them, and they staged a gathering to celebrate the return of their *Kontolulle*. The chiefs, followed by all the people from the villages round about, came together, and amidst great demonstrations presented de Bruijn with a long string of cowrie shells.

"You are a very great chief," they told him, "and in giving you this present we are only doing what is our right as big chiefs. We have collected these shells from the people and ask you to take them as a token of affection and loyalty."

Soalekigi and Weakebo were there, and Weakebo of course had to make a speech too, and he presented the *Kontolulle* with a pig. De Bruijn had to reply to all the speeches, until, not knowing what to say, he turned in desperation to Soalekigi and asked:

"What can I say this time?" and the old chief told him:

"Say that you have made a trip right through to Ielop, and all the way have found friends, and now the whole country from Orawja to Ielop is your country, the land of the *Kontolulle*."

When the people heard this they broke out again into wild shouting, gesticulation, and dancing.

*Soalekigi visits Amboina—Last messages from Res. Mag. Janssen—N.E.I. declares war on Japan—Van Eechoud's plight—A pig feast—De Bruijn leaves for Australia—He pleads with his Government and returns to the lakes.*

AS A result of his long talks with Soalekigi de Bruijn decided it would be a good idea to let the Migani chief see something more of the outside world, and it was arranged that Soalekigi, Weakebo, and an Ekari boy, Dominggoes, should go to Amboina and stay with the Resident Magistrate. Dominggoes was only about fifteen years of age, and an exceptionally bright and intelligent boy. He came from the village of Wageta, near Lake Tigi, but de Bruijn had first met him at Jaba. The lad had come to him and asked to be allowed to carry his knapsack, for which of course cowrie payment was made. After that he frequently visited Enarotali, and subsequently went with the expedition to Beura and Ielop. De Bruijn used him a lot in his study of the Ekari language. Usually he found the boys more helpful than the old men, who became self-conscious and not very eager to talk. The boys, however, chatted freely. They told their stories and legends, and from them de Bruijn was able to get the narrative form of their language, as well as the idiomatic terms used in ordinary conversation and village life. When de Bruijn was first learning the language Dominggoes was a great help, because with his quick understanding he seemed to sense what the other was trying to say and almost anticipated the words he wanted.

Weakebo, of course, had been to Amboina before—on the occasion when he had been so insulted by a coconut falling

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on his head—but Soalekigi had not been beyond Fak Fak. They left from Lake Paniai by plane.

On his arrival at Amboina Soalekigi betrayed no feelings. He greeted the Resident Magistrate as one dignitary meeting another, strolled about the grounds quite at his ease, and accepted his place as a guest in the palatial residence with decorum. Mr. Janssen was delighted with him; at every opportunity they chatted, and when three months had passed and the three men returned to their homes, he wrote to de Bruijn:

"Soalekigi is a great gentleman, and it has been a real pleasure to have had him here as my guest."

At about this time de Bruijn had to leave the lakes again. He was suffering from beriberi, and went to Babo for treatment, which consisted of a course of three injections every day for two months. He was naturally in closer touch with civilization, but it did not make him feel any happier. He was deeply concerned about the war situation and foresaw the possibility of a Japanese invasion, which in all probability would result in his being isolated in the central mountains, for he was determined that should such an invasion occur, he would remain in New Guinea if it was humanly possible to do so. With this in view, as soon as he returned from Babo he set about getting his supplies in order, and arranging for more to be brought in. Instead of waiting for the regular stores to be sent in the usual way he ordered quantities three months in advance of their need. Fortunately they came without question or delay and subsequently, when the lakes were surrounded by the Japanese and all other Posts and sources of supply were cut off, it was this foresight that enabled him and his men to retire to the jungle and farther into the mountains and carry on for some time in a reasonable state of living.

When he returned from his sick leave he found he had another friend at Enarotali: an old woman of about sixty

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years of age, "a lovely old woman," who tenderly watched over him and became as a mother. During all the time he knew her he never found out her name; she was only known as the wife of Nawipatoema, yet, every morning, at 6 o'clock punctually, she came to the young *Kontolulle's* hut and put hot sweet potatoes at his side, and if he slept heavily she shook him, saying: "Get up. Get up." And later, when the Japanese had begun their invasion, it was:

"Get up. Get up. The Japanese planes will come and kill you. Get up. Get up."

On the 6th December, 1941, Resident Magistrate J. H. Janssen, in a private letter to de Bruijn, wrote from Amboina:

"Whatever happens at the Post, maintain yourself in the central mountains."

Two days later the Netherlands East Indies declared war on Japan.

De Bruijn, however, had already written to Amboina volunteering to stay with the Police in the interior, and begging Janssen not to stop the work of exploration, as had been done in the previous year. In answer to this letter Janssen sent a radio. It was dated Christmas Day, the 25th December, 1941:

"The Netherlands flag will continue to fly in Dutch New Guinea. I know that under all circumstances you will be brave."

On that same day the last of the weekly K.N.I.L.M. supply planes came to Enarotali, and there began, as de Bruijn described it, "a long dark night that lasted for half a year."

On the 29th January, 1942, Amboina was occupied, and two weeks later Resident Magistrate Janssen died in a concentration camp. The only communication with the west was *Fak Fak*.

"Those last messages from a brave man and a good

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friend," said de Bruijn, "I kept by me. I read them over and over again, and all through the difficult days that lay ahead they were a source of inspiration and a stimulus to carry on."

On the morning of the 8th March, they heard of Java's plight:

"Dutchmen in these territories. We have fought shoulder to shoulder with our Indonesian friends; we have won and lost battles with them. The white inhabitants of the Indies never left their domiciles, thus proving to the world that we Netherlanders—no matter what race or colour—are inextricably bound up with our Indies Territory."

All day, restless and sad at heart, they hovered about the radio hut, waiting, hoping, knowing their last hope was gone. At 10.30, while the crisp silent night lay about the little mountain hut, they were still listening, and they heard that Bandoeng had capitulated—and the last message:

"We are now closing down. Good-bye until better times. Long live the Queen."

There was no sleep for anyone that night. De Bruijn told me:

"I lay and thought of that day on the 3rd July, 1596, when the Dutch first landed in Java, and all night I followed the course of our history through those 350 years."

It was one of his unconscious revealing flashes. In that simple statement he laid bare all the love and pride for his country, acknowledged the tradition that lay behind him, and realized the fullness of his great heritage.

And what of the future? His country had provided for that by producing men like de Bruijn. He was the living answer.

Next day he held a conference with the Police, and in an address, which was sincere, and I have no doubt very moving,

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he told them what had happened. They knew nothing more than that they were cut off in the central mountains of Netherlands New Guinea. They did not know if there was any Government, and if so, where it was, or if they could ever again expect any help.

Every morning they listened to the B.B.C. news at 7.45, then Tokyo at 8 a.m., and in the afternoon San Francisco, and all they learned was that the enemy was marching on and on. They lost all hope, but not faith. During this period de Bruijn found some diversion; he completed the Ekari Grammar, and compiled an Ekari-Dutch, Dutch-Ekari Dictionary, and also ran a weekly news service. After Java radio fell, he collected the news each day, and every Saturday gave out to the little stranded community a summary of world events. They called it the *Saturday Evening Post*.

On the 1st April the main north coast of Netherlands New Guinea and the north-west to Fak Fak were occupied, and all radio connection with these Posts was cut off. Again he called his men together, for the position was now very serious:

"The Japanese can be expected at any time," he told them. "I am not going to surrender, but if necessary will retire into the interior. I can't take you all with me, because there will not be sufficient supplies; but I will take two volunteers. Does anyone want to come?"

Immediately two Indonesians stepped forward and vowed to follow him wherever he went.

Presently they picked up a ray of hope. Word came through that the Netherlands East Indies Government was temporarily set up in Australia. Communication, through Merauke, was established once more.

Somewhere out on the Idenburg River, van Eechoud was isolated, and he, too, was able to establish communication, but of the outside world he knew no more than any of the others. He was cut off at the north, and the only way out of

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his camp was to come down the Idenburg River and then cross the long stretch of terrible uninhabitable country to the lakes. With indomitable courage he set out on this dreadful journey, but misfortune dogged his trail. Before he left the camp some of his men already had deserted, and on the 5th June, 1942, when he started, he had only seventeen with him. For three days he followed the Idenburg, then he was attacked by unfriendly Papuans. One of his men was killed and he and several others were wounded. In the meantime he had radioed to the Government that he was still in the interior and wished to be evacuated.

Although his journey downstream had taken three days, now with his wounded men, and wounded himself too, the return upstream was taking him a month. Acting on his radio the Government sent a plane to evacuate him, but owing to his delayed journey, when it reached the camp van Eechoud was not there. Eventually, when the party, sick and exhausted, got back to the base, he sent another radio and another plane was sent, but it was not until the 20th August, more than two months after he first set out on the journey, that he was evacuated. Van Eechoud never realized, even after that dreadful ordeal, how fortunate he was. He could never have got through to the lakes; the area was so thinly populated, and that only by a nomadic race of Papuans, that he would have got little or no help or food from them. His only supplies were sufficient for eight weeks, and the journey would have taken him at least four or five months.

On the 14th June a plane came over Lake Paniai. It caused a good deal of consternation because it was not expected, and everyone thought at first that it was one of the Japanese. De Bruijn was in the bathroom, clad only in his underpants, when excited voices shouted to him that a plane was coming over. As he was he made a dash for his knapsack and rifle and ran towards the jungle. Two of the police boys came after him calling:



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"Sir, I will take that. Sir, I will carry your rifle," and they took the things and ran with him.

The plane settled down on the lake, just in front of the Post, and to their great joy they saw it was one of their own. It brought Captain Spoor (now Lieut.-General Spoor, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army), who came on behalf of the Government. It was the first plane seen and the first human contact with the outside world for six long months: it was a great excitement, even though it only stayed for about an hour. Captain Spoor came to see what supplies were needed, but the Post was so well equipped that the list of requirements was very small, much to the Commandant's astonishment. Every other list he had had sent in from other bases was always so long and demanding. The only item de Bruijn urged him to send was milk, because an addition to the Enarotali family was expected. In the previous November Dr. Abdoe'rivai and his wife had arrived at the Post, and the brave little woman was expecting her first child. Fragile, petite, and very beautiful, Mrs. Abdoe'rivai endured the hardships of life in the central mountains, remained at her husband's side, and awaited the birth of their babe. The event took place on the 9th July, 1942, and a daughter named Erna Rosalie (note the resemblance to Enarotali) made history as being the first and only child of the Western world to be born at Wissel Lakes. The family was evacuated in November 1942. At the present time Mrs. Abdoe'rivai is investigating child welfare and kindergarten work in Australia, so that she can go back to her own country and give her own people and their children the benefit of her experience.

One excuse is as good as another, but surely these things called for a celebration, so the Ekari people around the lakes decided to hold a pig feast, and made their preparations amidst a scene of great excitement and painting of faces. To adorn themselves they like to use a certain red clay which,

however, in that locality is a very scarce and expensive commodity. Some of the men knew that de Bruijn had brought a large cake of it back with him from the Beura-Ielop expedition, and they had kept a watch on it with envious eyes. One afternoon five boys came to his hut.

"Sir," they asked, "can we borrow your red clay to paint our faces for the *joewo* (pig feast)?" and with his consent they scraped some off into the palms of their hands, damped it with spittle, and began to paint themselves. The effect was not very bright, so he gave them some crude gun grease, which mixed better and gave the clay a fine brilliance.

One day the clay brick was missing. No. No one had seen it, and it was not until two months later, when de Bruijn was going down the Orawja in a canoe with Dominggoes, one of the bodyguard, that he saw the brick in the boy's bag. He was so angry that he threw it overboard. Dominggoes was angry too.

"But you stole it from me," said de Bruijn.

"No, sir, I did not steal it. I only borrowed it."

A pig feast is a great event in the life of the people. It begins by a lot of the village chiefs getting together, and each of those who agree to take part in the feast, and thus become a sponsor, cuts a sapling from the nearby bush and leans it against the fence near his house, thereby announcing to the people that he is one of the owners of the feast. After a month or two work is begun on the construction of the *ema*, or dance house. Of the number of buildings erected for a pig feast this is the largest. It is about 30-40 feet long by 20-25 feet wide, and is approximately 15 feet high. About two-thirds of the building comprises the dance hall and the remainder is a vestibule or foyer. In the dance room good strong saplings are laid across a span of 20 feet or more, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  feet from the ground, and without any support in the middle, so that the floor becomes a sort of spring-board. Smaller saplings are then laid across and the floor is complete.

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The walls of the building are made of rough-hewn boards, with small spaces between each board to provide air. There are no windows, and as the eaves of the house come rather low, the interior is dark.

After the completion of the dance house, the sponsors of the feast each builds a house for himself, which is used for storing wood, sweet potatoes, and housing friends who come for the party. Other members of the village may also build such houses if they so desire. These, though usually fully as long as the dance house, are much narrower and lower. When three or four such places have been completed, a preliminary feast, called the *Nomobai*, is held, for which only a few pigs are killed. After it is over the dances begin, usually commencing at sunset and lasting through the night until sunrise.

The dance itself is quite simple. Firstly the men occupy the centre of the hall, forming a large circle, while the women make an outer ring. The men begin to chant slowly, walking all the time in a circle, clockwise fashion, and the chant they sing is the rain song, which begins:

*"Oewo réré, oewaja réré, kitopejo,  
Edi ka bobara . . ."*

(*"The waters are roaring, the waters are roaring, above the Kitopejo Mountain the rains are bursting . . ."*)

and as the men sing, the women, bearing torches of bundles of rushes, which provide both warmth and light, walk in the opposite direction. After a few minutes of this the men bend their knees and press down on the floor with their feet, using it as a spring-board, and all the time making a sucking noise like a person out of breath. The entire procedure lasts only a few minutes, then it is repeated over and over again until sunrise.

These dances are attended by all classes, young and old,

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and even mothers with babies in their carrying nets come and remain through the whole night. Young boys and girls dance with as much zest as their parents.

The nightly dances may continue for three or four months, until the real pig feast occurs. The people know the date fixed for the feast by watching the *poetoe*, which, as has been described elsewhere, is a piece of rattan in which a number of knots are tied, one being loosened each day until the last announces the day for the event has arrived. On the *togonoe*, the day before the big feast, the pigs are tied up ready for slaughtering, and friends arrive from other villages with much hubbub and excitement. They form little groups and stand about watching the pigs being cut up. Then, when the feast is ready, the heads of the various villages gather their people together and congregate at points about two hundred or three hundred yards away, and at a given signal all come charging at top speed, in single file, to the front of the hall, where they make a circle and perform a dance. Then after a few minutes they all mingle together, and for the remainder of that day and all the morrow they feast, and after that there is a good deal of sleeping.

In July, on the 23rd, when the next plane came to the lakes, de Bruijn went to Australia on sick leave and for a conference with his Government. He had had a lot of trouble with his eyes, which was due to the constant daily glare of the sun on the water of Lake Paniai. He left in a Dornier three-engine machine about five years old, and had a very unpleasant and anxious flight. About ninety miles west of Merauke they ran out of petrol and had to camp on the beach for three days while mosquitoes tried to devour them. The next stretch was to Australia, and there was another forced landing at Gladstone, on the Queensland coast, but this was pleasanter, because there was beer to be had, and de Bruijn had not tasted beer for twelve months. Then they went on to Sydney and Melbourne, and in the depth of a

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bitter winter the Melbourne folk were astonished to see a very thin bronzed figure walking about the streets clad only in shorts, puttees, jungle boots, a khaki shirt, and a bamboo hat. He had no other clothes, but it was not long before a warmer uniform was provided.

During his absence in Australia the administration of the lakes area was carried out by the Police Inspector at Merauke, but he was not at all happy about the situation, and sent adverse reports to the Government, contending that it was futile to try to carry on in the face of the Japanese invasion, and recommended evacuation and the closing down of the Posts. This did not please de Bruijn at all, and when the matter was brought up at the conference in Melbourne, he opposed it violently. The conversation was something like this:

"Let us keep what little we have," de Bruijn argued. "I am happy to go on, and ask to be sent back to the lakes."

"But we want you for other work. Will you take over the Post at Merauke?" countered the Government.

"No. I don't want to go to Merauke."

"Then there is other important work for you to do in Australia."

"But I don't want to remain in Australia. The intelligence work I can do in New Guinea is much more important to the Government."

"If you go back to the lakes, we can promise you no help. We have no planes and no ships." The Government was weakening.

"That does not matter, I can carry on. Please send me back to the lakes."

"Very well. If you want so much to go you may do so, on the understanding that the Government can promise you no help whatsoever. All the planes in Australia at the present time are required by General MacArthur or by the Australian Government. We have no means of sending you

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any supplies or any sort of help. If you care to go under those conditions you may do so."

"I will go," he said.

On the morning of the 5th November, 1942, a plane set out from Merauke, and de Bruijn looked out and saw his first and only view of all the southern range laid open to the morning sun. It was over three hundred years since Carstensz had seen it from the sea. Now de Bruijn was flying over it on one of those rare days when it stood clear and bright and green beneath the caps of glistening snow. Shortly before the mid-day clouds began to bank about the central ranges, the plane circled over Lake Paniai, gradually losing height, until it came down and settled gently on the water by the little jetty at Enarotali. Hearing it, the people ran from their huts and congregated by the shore, waiting and watching, tense and silent. As the engines stopped a strange sound wafted across to the plane, the only sound that could be heard; it was that of sixty, seventy, perhaps a hundred men tapping their fingers on their gourd *kotekas*—a sure sign of their excitement.

The slender khaki-clad figure emerged from the plane and climbed out on to the wing. He stood for a moment, trying to stifle his emotion, then, waving his bamboo hat, he gave forth such a mighty cry that it sped across the plains and echoed far away in the mountains. It was the *Kontolulle's* jungle call. Hundreds of silent people, men, women, and children, immediately sprang into action. They laughed and wept, danced and sang, and their cry went out after the echo of his, ringing from peak to peak, sounding the glad tidings.

"The *Kontolulle* has come. The *Kontolulle* has come."

# 10

*Raid on Japanese post at Oeta—Pigeon post—Japanese invasion—Waiting for evacuation—Establishment of base at Margrietdorp—Decision to remain in the mountains.*

DURING DE BRUIJN'S absence in Australia all had not gone well. On his return to the lakes he found, much to his consternation, that three of the *Bestuursassistenten*, for want of better authority, had been persuaded by the Japanese to report to their headquarters at Fak Fak. The Japanese had sent out a number of letters, one to de Bruijn, as District Officer at Wissel Lakes, one to Father Tillemans, one to the *Bestuursassistent* at Oeta, and yet another to the *Bestuursassistent* at Kokonao, a coastal village a little to the west of Timoeke. In all these letters they demanded that the administrative officials, with all their men, should report themselves at Fak Fak, and they were to take any radio equipment with them. Father Tillemans was on his way from Enarotali to Oeta when, about one day's journey south of Lake Tigi, he met some Papuans bringing the letter to him. He promptly turned about and went back to Enarotali, where he remained until de Bruijn returned from Australia. But the *Bestuursassistenten*, not knowing what was going to happen, and without de Bruijn's guidance and orders, were persuaded to obey the Japanese command. The whole situation was very awkward, because it was certain that from the men's possessions the enemy would have obtained maps, reports, and other information of considerable value to them, which made the position at the lakes very uncomfortable. The matter, however, whatever the consequences might be, was

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in de Bruijn's hands. He alone could deal with it, and on the 5th December, 1942, he took action.

Accompanied by Father Tillemans, and with a patrol of military police (all the men at the Post were now militarized) and a line of 136 Ekari carriers, he moved down the trail towards the coast, taking with them a portable radio. For days they pushed forward, making slow progress, because the trail which had not been used for five months had become overgrown with scrub vegetation, vines, and other jungle growth. With their *parangs*, the heavy Malayan knives which they always used in the jungle, they had to cut almost every yard of the way right down to Orawja. Here, where the river is navigable, they hoped to obtain canoes to carry them downstream for the remainder of the journey. It was their bad luck, after all this pushing and hacking along the trail, to find that no canoes were available.

They had no axes with them with which to cut heavy timber, so while they rested at the camp they sent out signals in the recognized Papuan fashion. The method is simple enough. You merely take a jungle knife, cut some fresh pieces of wood, and throw them into the river to float downstream, just as small boys do when they have races with bits of stick in any mountain stream. All the Papuans know this signal: it is one they frequently use themselves, especially when on expeditions, or when travelling from the interior towards the coast with tobacco for trading. It announces their coming, and is in fact a form of advertising, like sending out an advance agent. To anyone who knows the rivers these pieces of freshly cut wood are easily distinguishable from the ordinary driftwood. But in spite of these signals no one came, so they decided to follow the trail on foot as far as the mangrove swamps would allow. However, in two days relief came, and they sighted Papuans coming up with big canoes, so for the rest of the journey they were able to glide downstream to Oeta without further difficulty.



They learned that on the previous day two Japanese destroyers had passed along the coast off Oeta towards Timoeka. It seemed obvious that their intention was to land there and establish an air base. De Bruijn radioed a report of this to the authorities at Merauke, and a reconnaissance plane was sent over, but reported no activity. Two weeks later, however, a Japanese air strip was in course of construction at Timoeka.

One afternoon at Oeta the Papuan patrol, left there under Japanese instructions, crept into their huts to sleep. Accustomed as they were to coastal conditions, the heat was almost unbearable. There had been a terrific tropical storm accompanied by a deluge of rain, and the humidity was intense. Thankfully the boys laid down their rifles and went to sleep, blissfully unconscious of the party coming down upon them. At four o'clock in the afternoon de Bruijn and his men came into Oeta, and seeing no signs of activity, quietly made their way to the huts. The first thing the guards knew was that they were being rudely awakened and disarmed. Not that they minded in the least; they had had bitter experience at the hands of the Japanese. When they had recovered from the first feeling of alarm, their only reaction was a sense of relief, for they knew they were safe with the District Officer; he was not one who shot at sight.

In making a thorough tour of the place, de Bruijn collected much valuable information and intercepted correspondence and orders which confirmed that the two destroyers had put in at Timoeka and had landed 450 marines there. Next he turned to the house, which had been Father Tillemans' residence. The *Bestuursassistent* had locked and boarded up the doors and windows and put up a notice announcing that anyone opening the house or touching the contents would be acting contrary to Japanese orders. It was only a matter of seconds to tear these down and break in the door. Inside everything was as the priest had left it,

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and they packed his personal possessions, such as could be carried, and collected his stores of food. The released patrol, glad of their freedom, worked willingly.

Before leaving Oeta there was one more thing to be done. De Bruijn called the population together and addressed them, pleading with them not to work for the Japanese. They listened attentively, and before he left them enthusiastically vowed their allegiance to the District Officer.

At that time de Bruijn bore the rank of second-lieutenant, but all his messages and reports were signed as "Major." This piece of subterfuge, he argued, would confuse the Japanese should any of his messages be intercepted. Not having any accurate knowledge of the interior, they would naturally assume that a major would have a considerable military force with him, and this theory was later borne out by the fact that the enemy sent a far greater force into the interior than was necessary.

After having cleaned up all they could in Oeta, the party withdrew, taking the released men with them. They went inland, and camped at the junction where a branch of the river flows away to the coast. Thus, if the Japanese had intended to come by an inland trail from Timoeke to cut them off, they still had their escape clear by taking the river up to Orawja. They could not be intercepted at any other point because of the impassable swamps beyond the river and stretching inland above the trail which the Japanese might possibly use. They stayed at this camp for about ten days, and then, nothing eventuating, the whole party returned to the lakes. Three hundred men came down from the mountains to meet them and to help carry the supplies, for in addition to their own needs they now had all the food and possessions recovered from Father Tillemans' house. As they moved up the trail they destroyed the bridges one by one, so that if the Japanese came in that way their progress would be delayed. Only one bridge was left; it was seldom used

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and few knew of it. And so the great line moved towards the mountains, and when eventually they all came into Enarotali they had almost entirely cut themselves off from the coast.

De Bruijn did not know until he came back to the Post that the Japanese, angered by his raid on Oeta, had sent Zero and float planes on reconnaissance flights over the lakes. It was obvious they were going to pay him closer attention.

To remain in the interior was going to become increasingly difficult, but de Bruijn was determined to stay there, and forestalling possible instructions from his Government, he sent a message to them requesting that he should be left in the mountains with four men, and that the rest of the party should be evacuated. The cold courage and determination that prompted this request are amazing. At the very best it meant complete isolation, but he saw there was work to be done, and isolation did not mean as much to him as it would to most men. He could serve his country, and he was not dependent upon white people to help him. He knew he was safe with his dark friends of the mountains. Without argument the Government agreed to his suggestion. The party would be evacuated gradually, they said, and he would be allowed to remain to carry on intelligence work and to "maintain the flag."

With his customary foresight de Bruijn had seen a great opportunity for intelligence work here. Even before he left Australia he had had this in view, and as a part of his plan for the future had taken back with him fifty-two carrier pigeons which he acquired from the Australian Army Signal Corps at Sydney. Already these birds were being trained at Enarotali.

The evacuation agreed to by the Government was so "gradual" that the first Catalina came from Australia within about a fortnight and evacuated the native teachers and a number of police, but it was four months before any other plane arrived.

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In the meantime the work at the lakes had to be carried on, and in January 1943 a part of the Post was transferred to a secret place, hidden in the jungle, twelve miles away on the other side of Lake Paniai. The establishment of this base took place on the day of the birth of Princess Juliana's youngest daughter, and in honour of the occasion de Bruijn named it Margrietdorp. Here, in the hidden, camouflaged camp, they could hide their radios and set up their pigeon post, and this is, in all probability, the only part of New Guinea in which carrier pigeons have been used.

"We had to distinguish the birds somehow," said de Bruijn. "Of course they had already been given numbers, which were stamped on the metal bands around their legs, but we found it less confusing to give them names, so we called them after well-known fliers. There was Lindbergh, Kingsford-Smith, and so on, and a number named after our own famous Dutch airmen. Most of them were very good, but Lindbergh was a stupid bird; he had no sense of direction whatever, and was lost on the first flight. We let him loose and watched him circle over the base, then, instead of turning south, he went due north and was never seen again."

The birds were particularly useful in maintaining communication between Enarotali and Margrietdorp, where the radio operator, Rudy Gout, was based. The journey across the lake took two hours by boat and then another hour's walking into the camp, and although they were able to use visual morse signals to some extent, pigeons were used to carry telegrams from Margrietdorp to Enarotali. Curiously enough, they never flew across the water, but always went the longest route overland. A few never reached their destination: perhaps the Papuans got them, thinking they were fine wood pigeons.

At this time de Bruijn realized how little he knew about radio. Rudy Gout had come from Australia with him, and it was all right while they were together at Enarotali, but now

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that Gout was based at Margrietdorp, de Bruijn had to learn how to operate so as to be able to communicate between the two positions.

It was hoped that with the evacuation of most of the party they would be able to abandon Enarotali entirely, and the five men who were to remain behind would then be able to work from their hiding-place in the jungle, and thus deceive the Japanese into thinking that they had all been evacuated from the district. But the Japanese reconnaissance flights became more frequent, and as the evacuation was so slow in taking place there were still too many men at the Post for all to go into hiding, and Enarotali had still to be maintained. It was easy for the enemy as they flew over to see the huts and the barracks and that the place was still occupied.

Propaganda spread amongst the population played a very important part in ensuing events. The Ekari chief, Weakebo, was a good mouthpiece, so de Bruijn made a trip to have a talk with his friend. He related what he knew about the Japanese and their methods, and told him some fearful horror stories, which were passed on, suitably embellished, to the people. Weakebo was profoundly impressed by what the *Kontolulle* told him; moreover, he was deeply disturbed. After having given the subject much consideration he came forward with a proposal:

"I will go to the coast myself," he said, "and will find the Japanese commander. I will talk with him, and propose to him that the Japanese shall have all the country they want on the north, west, and south coasts, but they should leave all the interior alone, to be occupied by the *Kontolulle*."

It was a typical example of Ekari nature and simplicity and of their way of thinking. The *Kontolulle* had come, peacefully, and made his home with them. They had already acknowledged him as a very big chief, and all the country from west of the lakes right through to Beura and Ielop was his. It was beyond the comprehension of Weakebo that any

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should want to drive the *Kontolulle* out. So typical was this attitude of the mountain Papuan towards the *Kontolulle* that as an example it was later embodied in an official report, and has since been incorporated in the school for *Binnenlandsch Bestuur* (Department of Interior) studies.

February and March went by, and the party impatiently awaited the day of their evacuation. Still the plane did not come. It was not just a silence; it was worse. The Government had said, "We will send another plane in two weeks," but it did not come. Then there was another promise, and another disappointment, another and another, and so they passed into the fourth month of waiting, with danger looming nearer.

On three successive days in April—the 15th, 16th, and 17th—the Japanese made long and concentrated flights over the lakes, often coming down to within 150 feet. It was obvious that they were taking photographs and intended occupation. One came down almost to the roof of the barracks. On these occasions de Bruijn disguised himself as a Papuan. He wore one of their netted wigs (which had been boiled ten times) and threw a net over his shoulders.

It was not possible now for de Bruijn to make any extensive patrols or to leave the Post for any length of time, but the long period of waiting provided him with ample opportunity to whip up propaganda amongst the people. Weakebo, with his passion for making speeches, was spreading the word with good effect. De Bruijn made the bullets and Weakebo fired them. As the Chief continued to address the people, he added colour to his stories, and as they were passed on from village to village they grew in alarming proportions, and Weakebo always had another, even more terrible, with which to cap them. At one large gathering after de Bruijn had been talking to the people, he turned to Weakebo and said:

"I am tired of talking. You make a speech." Weakebo

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sprang to his feet, and held forth at great length, and among the stories he told them was one something like this:

"Away at Sourabaya" (which to this people represents any part of the world beyond New Guinea)—"away at Soerabaya, there is a clan of white women who always keep to themselves. They do not marry, and they never at any time have anything to do with men. The Japanese went to Soerabaya, and they took this clan of white women and attacked them horribly and many were brutally killed. The Japanese are very cruel people, and will treat our women in the same way if they come here." Clearly the story was made up from remembered scraps of conversation gleaned from the native teachers as to the raping of Roman Catholic Sisters by the Japanese. De Bruijn had never told Weakebo of this, and it was astonishing to him to listen to the Chief unexpectedly putting these scraps together into a horror story.

Although the District Officer was unable to leave the Post he was able to get information by sending out small parties. A number of the people would go forth, in groups of three or four, unostentatiously working their way towards the coast, and in due course return with intelligence for him. For these services he paid them with cowries or axes. During their expeditions to the lower regions they would inspect the trails, see that the bridges remained broken down, and gather news of the whereabouts of the Japanese as they slowly came inland. When the enemy did come the news was in first. Most of this work was arranged by Weakebo. It was he who selected the men and sent them out, and on their return he collected the information from them and passed it on to de Bruijn, who radioed it to his Government. Weakebo was paid, and distributed payment to the men, but it has to be admitted that the old rascal was human enough to deduct what amounted to about sixty per cent. of the wages as commission.

Commission was one of Weakebo's strong points. He was

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a fine fellow in many ways, but he had never heard of the adage, and honesty was not his best policy. At one time he made a trip through the mountains, telling the people in the village that they had to pay him a pig.

"I was the first one who ever made a contract with the *Kontolulle*," he told them. "If I had not done so you would all be poor. Now, because of me, you are not poor, so you must pay me in pigs."

De Bruijn, when he heard of this, was very annoyed, and reprimanded Weakebo severely; but it was very difficult, because in response to his reprimands the Chief blandly replied: "But it is true." It was. Nevertheless he was restrained. Fortunately, in introducing this new and high moral code into the life of a primitive people they were in ignorance of how frequently it is broken by their less scrupulous white brethren.

The month of May came and found the party still waiting to be evacuated. No planes came, no patrols were made; the life of every one of them was in a state of perpetual uncertainty. To fill in time they started their own newspaper. De Bruijn, Father Tillemans, the doctor, Rudy Gout the radio operator, all made contributions, and copies, running to about eight pages, were typed out. Gout, who was also an artist, made drawings and cartoons for each copy, and *The Margrietdorp Herald* appeared. Two issues were made, and a third was prepared but never published. In the second issue de Bruijn contributed an article in which he urged the men, instead of evacuating, as most of them wanted to do, to go with him beyond the mountains, into the unknown. He quoted from Kipling's poem "The Explorer":

"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look  
behind the Ranges——

Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting  
for you. Go!"



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And he told the story of Herman Detzner, the German officer who, during the 1914-18 war, escaped in (now British) New Guinea, and for four years evaded the Australians, who hunted him up and down the ranges. All this time Detzner, without any white companion, lived alone, or with the natives whom he did not know and could not trust. If he could do that, argued de Bruijn, surely they, with their friendly relations with the population, could manage to do even more. (Note: It was quite by chance that de Bruijn had just read *High Lights and Flights in New Guinea*, and quoted the Kipling poem and the Detzner story from a copy in his possession.)

On the 11th May a mountain Papuan brought in a report that he had heard in one of the villages that sixty Japanese were in Mapia, south-west of the lakes, and about five to seven days distant. The people from Tukakibo and Mowanmani, he said, had brought pigs to Mapia to present to the Japanese. Three days later de Bruijn, with three police and a few Ekaris, paid a visit to these two villages to learn more about the story, and, if it proved to be true, to punish the people, for they had often been warned not to do this. When he arrived he learned that a party of sixty Japanese had been in Mapia a week previously, and that some of the Papuans had worked for them and carried supplies from the coast. He was very disturbed to hear that the Japanese had been distributing cowrie shells freely and bribing the Papuans, thus endangering the economic and financial stability of the district. And all the time, coming up the trail, they had been asking: "Where is the *Kontolulle*? Where is the *Kontolulle*?" There was a story that they had brought two large jungle knives with them which they brandished, saying: "This is for Father Tillemans, and this one is for the *Kontolulle*." At least Tillemans and de Bruijn knew what their fate would be if they fell into the enemy's hands.

As usual the people of the villages were called together.

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In talking to them de Bruijn made it quite clear that if they insisted upon working for the Japanese, he would be their enemy, and told them what to expect should that situation arise. Most of the people took it quietly, but two men who had been singled out as culprits were very uneasy, and thought it best to make a dash for freedom while they had the chance. One bolted and escaped into the jungle, and the other was shot dead while on the run.

On his return once more to Enarotali de Bruijn sent a message to his Government at Melbourne, informing them that the Japanese were already in the mountains and in the vicinity of the lakes, and he urged that an effort should be made to evacuate the other members as soon as possible. To this the Government replied that the proposition was too dangerous, and in any event they hadn't any naval sea-planes available, and there was no place other than Lake Paniai for planes to land. They thought that under the circumstances, it would be advisable for the party to move north-east to the Rouffaer River, and they could be evacuated from there. This was the awful region through which van Eechoud had intended to travel in his attempt to reach the lakes, and had failed. It would have taken the party several weeks to make the journey, and there were no supplies or bivouacs arranged for such an eventuality—so little did the Government know about the interior. De Bruijn was very annoyed at this suggestion, and, for the first time since his return from Australia, began to take a stand against the Government. With some heat he replied that their proposal was impracticable.

"If it is too dangerous for a plane to come to the lakes," he said, "perhaps it would be better if we all walked to Port Moresby!"

There was no radio reply to this sarcastic message, but three days later a plane came to Lake Paniai. It brought Rear-Admiral Koenraad, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal

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Netherlands Navy in Australia. He came on a visit of inspection and for discussion with the District Officer and his party. With him he carried a letter to de Bruijn from Mr. Ch. O. van der Plas, then Chief Commissioner for the Netherlands East Indies and Director of the Department of Internal Affairs (*Department van Binnenlandsch Bestuur*), an extract from which is translated as follows:

"I express my deep appreciation of your courage and strength of mind, your love for your country, with which you have isolated yourself in a wild country far from us, fulfilling your duty and continuing to do so. For us older men, whose work is ending, it is a precious thing to see how the younger ones are seeing and fulfilling their duty, because it is they who will bring our country back to life and prosperity. Those who remain at Wissel Lakes must do so voluntarily. This applies to you, too. However important it may be to keep the Dutch flag flying in Netherlands Central New Guinea (besides the importance of such excellent work as you are doing), you and your men may only stay voluntarily. . . .

"If you say, after all your difficulties and disappointments that we have not been able to help you more, 'I want to be evacuated,' well, there will be no one to blame you for that, because you have shown your worth. So you must all decide for yourselves what you want to do.

"If you remain there should be comradeship between you all, and all the members of the party must have faith in their leader. Also there should be equality among you. Then you may have some small chance of success in a dangerous enterprise. . . ."

Before de Bruijn entered into any discussion with Rear-Admiral Koenraad he read the letter over and over again, but even before he had received it he had made up his mind.

The Rear-Admiral stood in de Bruijn's hut. He was rather perturbed at the way in which the conversation was frequently interrupted by strange naked Papuan people wandering in for a chat, and using the District Officer's quarters as their

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own. It was too communal for his liking. He raised his eyebrows a little at the realization that such a thing was not only permitted but appeared to be encouraged. He was not quite sure what he should do about it. Nor did he readily regain his mental equilibrium when one of the men stood in front of his massive frame calmly looking him up and down. He looked at the young District Officer, but all he saw there was a quiet smile of amusement, which turned to convulsive laughter when the Papuan exclaimed:

"*Oh me ibo!*" (What a big man!)

Then perhaps the Rear-Admiral began to realize how their *Kontolulle* had won the friendship of these people, how his wise administration and careful handling of them (so unlike that of some of the other Posts and Mission Stations he had seen) had preserved their natural frankness, kept them unspoilt and untarnished by the effects of Western civilization. Outwardly the young man appeared to be too gentle, but Koenraad knew how firm he could be. When he was roused to anger he feared and spared no one.

Reverting to the discussion, the Rear-Admiral asked:

"What are you going to do?"

"I shall stay here," de Bruijn replied without hesitation.

"But what is the use? How can you possibly carry on? Would it not be better to be evacuated?"

And a cold voice answered: "I shall stay here."

It was a hard decision to make, but de Bruijn had long since made up his mind. Whatever he felt inwardly there was no visible sign of hesitation or emotion. He would not allow himself to be tempted now by the knowledge that his eyes were still giving him considerable trouble, that he was not feeling very well, and that he would be practically alone. It was not an exhibition of bombast or cheap heroics; in all probability he never even thought of it as duty. At a time like this such men do not think about these things. They do not think, they act, and because of their heritage and

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tradition there is no question of right or wrong. There was no need for any spirit of the great to remind de Bruijn of the motto of the House of Orange; there was no need for him to call it to mind. It was a part of his being. "*Je maintiendrai*" (I will maintain).

"Very well," said the Rear-Admiral, "I can't stop you. But if you do stay, don't do anything rash. Don't try to be brave and do dangerous things. Information is more valuable."

De Bruijn looked towards the lake, and saw the plane rocking on the water as the wind swept across from Stormhoek. It seemed only a few yards away. . . . Then his eyes lifted to the mountains.

"I must write a letter," he said, and sat down at his table. Taking his pen, he wrote:

" . . . I have decided to stay in New Guinea. If Detzner could do that for four years, living only with the natives, I can do it too. I don't want to give up. Even if the Japanese come and occupy the Post, it is still possible for me to stay. Detzner did it alone. I have 50,000 friends. . . ."

He sealed the envelope, and handing it to Rear-Admiral Koenraad, said:

"When you return to Australia, will you please give this to Mr. van der Plas."

*Isolation—Destruction of Enarotali—Formation of "Oak-tree" party—Weakebo fools the Japanese—The people's disgust at their habits—Weakebo's famous speech—Margrietdorp abandoned—The march to Wandai.*

ON THE morning of the 24th May, 1943, the mists lay softly on Lake Paniai. It was only five o'clock, and still quite dark. Even so the party had been astir for some time, and now they were all gathered by the little jetty at Enarotali, anxiously scanning the water. Yes, the mists were lifting. Gently they rose from the water and rolled towards the valleys and up the mountain slopes, to come to rest in soft billows on the rugged peaks.

Within a quarter of an hour or so the canoes were loaded with passengers and rowed to where the plane, with her engines running and lights blinking, swung at her mooring. At 5.45 she moved and turned, lazily and heavily, then quickly coming to life ran across the lake. Five minutes later she was in the air, circling the water and flying low over the base. On the shore stood a group of nine men, still hovering about the jetty. Two, who were in front of the others, waved their hands and called "Good luck," though their actions could not have been seen or their voices heard. Swiftly the plane went out over the mountains, her coloured lights glowing as she flew into the first flush of dawn. The two men faced each other, each proffering a hand. "And good luck to us," they said. De Bruijn and Rudy Gout joined the others—"And good luck to us all."

With them were Corporal Berger, three policemen

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(Kottadiny, Kaboeroean and Habel Honggoljan), the carpenter Tumahu, a convict Boo, and de Bruijn's houseboy Nurwe—all Indonesians. The nine men made up the entire party, which henceforth, for security reasons, was to be known as "Oaktree." All had voluntarily decided to stay in the central mountains of Netherlands New Guinea, cut off from civilization, the enemy on their heels, and little hope of getting supplies or help. They had chosen: the decision was theirs alone. Two of the police boys had come to de Bruijn and begged to be allowed to stay with him, and when he asked if any others wished to do so, four volunteered—the third police boy, and Tumahu, Boo, and Nurwee. The latter had been de Bruijn's constant attendant from the time of his days at Ceram, and had come to Enarotali and remained with him throughout.

Now they could abandon Enarotali, and immediate arrangements were made for the transfer of the remainder of their supplies to Margrietdorp. The boys were given rifles, and became the first members of de Bruijn's bodyguard. On that memorable morning "Oaktree" was born.

Two days later the Japanese were at the lakes, but they were too late. Enarotali was no more. Already the buildings had been destroyed. The "Oaktree" had too much to do to attend to this themselves, so the Papuans were given quantities of kerosene and instructed to set fire to the buildings. The dry timbers, bark, and leaves, of which the huts were constructed, went up in a great blaze, columns of smoke rose above the mountains, then after a while the hot embers, scattered by the winds from Stormhoek, were all that remained of the first Administrative Post in the central mountains. The permanent radio set had been broken up, the motor-launch, a smaller launch, the outboard motors, and the mission canoe lay at the bottom of the lake. There was nothing but desolation, but twelve miles away, at Margrietdorp, hidden in the jungle, a little "Oaktree" flourished,

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soon to be as strong and deeply rooted as the mighty trees that grew about it.

On the very next day three Ekari boys from Jaba walked into Margrietdorp. They had been sent by Weakebo with an urgent message for the *Kontolulle*, saying that two "Soerabaya" people had arrived at Mejepa, by Lake Tigi, with a strange story of having been lost in the jungle, and asked for food. Weakebo went out to see them, and immediately mistrusted their story. One of them was an old *goeroe* who had been discharged from the Mission in 1940, and Weakebo knew all about him, and was aware that he knew the jungle very well. The old Chief was quite shrewd enough to realize that the Japanese had sent the two men to Lake Tigi for information, and that they were following on their trail; in fact, within twenty-four hours a party of sixty Japanese with fifty carriers was seen coming in.

De Bruijn sent Corporal Berger with two police to investigate, and they set out on their mission in the middle of the night. At the same time Gout, the radio operator, was given instructions to be ready to leave early in the morning for the first retiring place, which had already been arranged, at Oewagimoma, three or four days' walking to the north of Margrietdorp. Word was also sent to Weakebo telling him to retire from Jaba to the village of Kaitara, on the far side of the Jawe River, and he did so at once, taking with him his wives, children, and pigs.

Now Weakebo had ten goats, most of which were the progeny of two that had been given to him in 1940. He also had a lot of chickens and two geese. He had not had time to get these goats and geese across to Kaitara before the Japanese came into Jaba. He deeply regretted having to part with them, for he was a man who was intensely proud of his possessions, but the loss of the geese grieved him most, for he was not only proud but strangely fond of them.

The Japanese came to the now deserted village of Jaba,



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and promptly killed most of the goats and many of the chickens, and across the river Weakebo heard of these things with increasing rage. Anxiously he watched, and saw that for some reason or other the geese were left alone. Then he evolved a plan.

One morning the Chief discarded his old pair of shorts, firmly attached his *koteka*, and crossing the river entered the Japanese camp. At first the guards eyed him suspiciously, but to them he appeared to be a simple, amiable old man, and quite harmless, so they let him wander about. He was quite friendly and unafraid, for he made talk with them in a childish way, and was curious about everything he saw. It was obvious, they thought, that he had seen and knew very little. Presently Weakebo's attention became fixed upon a shirt.

"What is that strange thing?" he asked. It was explained to him, and they even bothered to show him how it was worn. Weakebo shook his head disapprovingly.

"And what is that?" He had seen a rifle.

"And what are those things?" They were cartridges.

Weakebo did not comprehend. Then he saw other objects and asked their names and uses. The old Chief was playing the part of the village idiot with great success, and thoroughly enjoying himself. Presently his eyes rested on his beloved geese. Smiling blandly and assuming curiosity, he said:

"What strange birds. What are they called, and where do such strange birds come from?"

It was explained that they were geese, and the Japanese had found them in the village when they came there.

"Strange birds. Strange birds," muttered Weakebo, and passed on to the next curiosity, which, however, was not far away from the geese.

The Japanese were beginning to tire of this old simpleton. Moreover, it was lunch time, so they lost interest in him and went off to get their meal, leaving him to wander about alone.

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Suddenly there was a squawking and a flutter of frightened birds, and the Japanese, looking out, saw a dark, naked figure running towards the river with a goose under one arm. Weakebo had only managed to catch one of the birds, but he had that securely held and had a good start. A few shots were fired: they went wide; and on the other side of the river Weakebo grinned as he put his bird down and petted it. He had only had time to catch one, but he had that safe, and he had outwitted those stupid, horrible people who had killed his goats and chickens and robbed his gardens.

The people of the central mountains had, of course, never seen Japanese before; from the outside world they knew only Dutch and Indonesians, and perhaps two or three American missionaries. Even all the horror stories they had been told did not prepare them for what they were to see for themselves, such things as the *Kontolulle* had not thought to tell them. De Bruijn had instructed the people to leave their villages as the Japanese approached, and this they did. As a consequence the invaders got no information, but in their anger they burned the houses, killed the pigs and chickens, and stripped the gardens. When they had passed on the people returned to a scene of desolation, which did not enhance the reputation of the Japanese. It was yet another instance of the importance of first impressions, and the Papuans began to make comparisons. It was the natural thing for them to do, and between themselves in little village groups they compared the Japanese with the Dutch and the Indonesians, and discussed the difference between the considerate *Kontolulle* and the behaviour of these new people who treated everything in their way so ruthlessly. They were horrified, too, to see them killing the pigs and eating the raw flesh and drinking the blood. Nothing disgusted them more, because they themselves never ate anything uncooked, not even a sweet potato.

And their clothes! Short pants and a bare body were all

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right, but these creatures, in their camps, wore only a *chawat*—a loin-cloth between the legs. The mountain people were so careful about their *kotekas*. Then too they ate rice with sticks. Why did they not have spoons, like decent people? Even they, the Ekaris and the Zonggonaos, when they were given rice, asked for spoons, and if the *Kontolulle* did not have enough to go round, they cut their own out of wood.

But the *chawat*! Like old women they tut-tutted, shook their heads in disgust, and tightened the cords that held their *kotekas* in place. Never had they seen anything so vulgar.

De Bruijn had made it a practice never to give the people shirts or shorts; sometimes they got old ones cast off by the police, but they were never distributed. Consequently, very few wore clothes, only the *koteka* tube, and they were so particular about this that if it got washed away while crossing a river, or displaced when going through the dense jungle growth, there was invariably great confusion until modesty was restored. They knew that some of the coastal Papuans wore only a *chawat*, and strongly disapproved. They looked upon coastal people more in sorrow than in anger, because they of the mountains were a superior race. After all, these coastal people were nomadic, without homes or gardens. So superior were the Ekari and Migani people that on one occasion they came to the *Kontolulle* full of complaint: they were very hurt and angry because some of the police had called them Papuans.

"We will work for you," they said, "but we will not work for your police if they call us Papuans. We are Ekari and Migani people, and have nothing to do with the Papuan (coastal) people, who do not even own a pig and have to work for their own food."

As de Bruijn came to enquire into this matter he found, when on his expeditions, that if the people of the villages of an entirely different tribe and in a new region were at all troublesome, it was usually due to their objection to the

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party wearing clothes. The reason given was that clothes are smelly things, the smell makes people ill and then they die. He discovered too that one of the reasons for the hostility of the Kebo people, with whom he had made pitched battle, was their objection to the men wearing clothes, which brought bad luck to the district. No wonder they objected to the Japanese.

Yet in spite of the general hostility towards the newcomers there were weak ones who thought it wise to work for the *Kontolulle* while he was there and for the Japanese when they came, and they said:

"We will work for them and sell them pigs, for they have plenty of cowrie shells. Then, when the *Kontolulle* comes back we will work for him and give him pigs."

It was then that Weakebo made his most famous speech. In part it was a parallel to the Sermon on the Mount. He upbraided the people for their weakness and their falseness to the *Kontolulle*, and expounded at length on the loyalty and duty due to him. He told them of the darkness that was within them.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

Obviously Weakebo did not use these words of the New Testament: he had never heard them; but what he told the people in his own way was in effect the same, and in an emotional outburst he concluded with these words:

"You cannot choose both the Japanese and the *Kontolulle*. You cannot work for one and then for the other. I am your chief, and I choose the *Kontolulle*. Who will follow me?"

In a scene of great excitement they rose from their haunches and vowed to follow Weakebo.

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The approach of the Japanese invaders and some knowledge and experience of their habits brought the Ekaris and the Miganis closer together. Thus it came about that Soalekigi left his village at Itodah and came to be with Weakebo at Kaitara on the other side of the Jawe. So two of the most influential chiefs in the central mountains and the *Kontolulle's* avowed best friends joined forces against a common enemy.

With the Japanese now in the Wissel Lakes district, the effect of the old chief's speech was to have very far-reaching results, which were to prove of great benefit to the work, and even to the lives of the men who had remained to carry on their job in the mountains.

On the 28th May Margrietdorp had to be abandoned and all the buildings destroyed. It was a hard thing to have to do. They had all come to like Margrietdorp; it had been a nice base, and under the guidance of Toemaho, the carpenter, buildings had been erected, built of cut planks and made to last. But the withdrawal was necessary, and it meant leaving these people in their villages to an unknown fate. The farewell scene was very moving. There, in the jungle beyond Lake Paniai, they came to say good-bye to the *Kontolulle*, and they sat about in groups, crying with emotion.

"I am going away," de Bruijn told them, "but I will come back to you. When the Japanese come you must tell them we have all left by the plane that took the others away. They must not know that we are here. As soon as it is possible I will come back. Now I am going. I can take some of you with me if you want to come, but I can only take unmarried men."

Almost before the words were spoken thirty men came forward. Joyfully he accepted them, and they went away with him and served him throughout all his long journeyings in the mountains. "Oaktree" was growing. Its members were now thirty-nine strong.

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Finally, when the Government ordered de Bruijn's evacuation, he said he would only leave if all his party came too, and eventually these loyal, primitive, stone-age people followed their *Kontolulle* to Australia. (Later these boys returned to Hollandia, and were enlisted in a wholly Papuan armed battalion under the command of Captain van Eechoud.)

There was no denying it, they all felt very sad at leaving Margrietdorp. The base was only four months old, and everything, even the nice bungalow built by Tumahu, had to go. The greatest loss of all was the necessary destruction of de Bruijn's anthropological notes which he had made and collected ever since he first arrived at the lakes. Four big tins of them were too heavy to carry in addition to their supplies and equipment, and if they had been buried the Japanese might have found them. They were all burned and lost to the world for ever. There were fifteen hundred N.E.I. guilders there too, and these they divided into three dumps and buried at various sites close by the camp.

It was a most dismal time, made the more so by the emotional weeping of the people. Constant to the last, the wife of Nawipatoema, the old woman who had brought the *Kontolulle* his hot sweet potato every morning, was there too, and had brought her husband with her to say good-bye. During those last few days, at six o'clock each morning, she still brought the *Kontolulle* hot potato, and as she put it at his side the tears streamed down her wrinkled old face. Nothing could console her. She cried and cried for three whole days, and, with the devotion of a mother watching over her only dearly loved son, she remained by him until he turned towards the trail leading into the unknown.

He did not go alone. From all directions hundreds of Ekari people came in and carried supplies to the three emergency bases that had been set up at Oewagimoma, Masiga, and Waniboega. The dark hordes lifted and carried and moved out along the trails. Anyone who could have wit-

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nessed the stirring scene would never have doubted de Bruijn's statement that he had his friends in the mountains. They were a marvellous help, and without their aid it would have been most difficult to get supplies forward to establish the new bases and to maintain the party during their future wanderings. In fact, if this help had not been forthcoming, the greater portion of their stores would have had to be destroyed.

The story that the District Officer and his men had all been evacuated from the lakes proved to be very useful. When the Japanese arrived they didn't know whether to believe it or not, and yet, as evidence, lay the dead embers of Enarotali. It was two or three months before they actually knew for certain that de Bruijn was still in the mountains.

In addition to the thirty men who volunteered to follow de Bruijn were two Migani girls, Apalapaloe and Zegelegaloe, both of them nieces of Soalekigi; and strange as it may seem to have two girls in such a party, they were accepted because they both spoke the language of the Migani people, into whose territory the "Oaktree" party was about to retire, and they were to prove very useful, not only as interpreters, but as ambassadors. When they came to a region where white people had never been before, the people's suspicions were quieted by the fact that two girls, who could speak their language, accompanied the party, unharmed and friendly.

Radio Operator Gout, with the two portable radio sets and part of the supplies of rations and ammunition, left for Oewagimoma, the first retiring post, taking the direct route through Koemopa. On the following day de Bruijn, also with supplies, retired by a different route, working out to Waniboega. Thus, if the Japanese came up the trail and learned that the party had retired from Margrietdorp, they would not know which route to follow.

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It was a great pity that the noble old man, Soalekigi, could not accompany his *Kontolulle*. But Soalekigi, with his wives and families, had his own responsibilities, and de Bruijn would not ask him to shelve them. Soalekigi therefore remained at Koegapa, and never saw his beloved *Kontolulle* again.

There was a pathetic little scene one day when a small, sturdy boy of fifteen, with only one leg, hobbled in on two sticks. He was known as Mokipi, and came from the village of Koegapa, the former home of Soalekigi, in the Migana enclave among the Ekari people. Mokipi as a babe had been left alone in the hut. Sleeping by the fire, he had turned in his sleep and rolled down the slope with one leg lying on the burning logs, and lay there until he was rescued. But it was too late to save his leg. How he ever lived is an amazing thing. Yet he survived and grew up into a fine lad. Now he had walked all the way to find the *Kontolulle*. He was very anxious, and must see him.

"Sir," said Mokipi, "I want to come with you. Will you let me come?"

It was hard to have to disappoint any of these people, who were so eager to help, but in this instance de Bruijn had to talk with the boy and point out the difficulties ahead. It was more than likely that with his disability he would be more of a hindrance than a help.

"But, sir," the boy persisted, "I can walk quite well. With these two sticks I can walk as fast as any other man. Oh, sir, please let me come."

"Very well, we will see how you get on. You can come if you want to."

Full of gratitude the boy joined the party. He stumped along with his sticks, and for six hours they all walked away from Margrietdorp to the north-east, along the heavy muddy track towards Koemopa, and in spite of his handicap Mokipi often made better pace than some of the men. But de Bruijn saw that it was too much for him, and he dare not take the



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risk of unavoidable delays. He was sorry for the boy, but he knew what the country ahead was like, and the hard travelling that would be entailed through the pass over the mountain range that lay between them and Wandai, and finally Mokipi was persuaded that it would be safer for him to be amongst his own people at Koegapa.

Towards the end of the afternoon they crossed the Ara River and made camp by a clear spring on the northern bank. The population of Koemopa was only about 100 to 150 all told: all good friendly people of the Jogli clan of the Ekari tribe. Some distance away from the village huts was a house formerly occupied by a native teacher. It was now empty, but it was too prominent in the landscape.

"If that house is left there," said de Bruijn, "the Japanese will see it, and they will think we are still here. It would be better to destroy it."

Soon the house was ablaze. But the people did more than burn it. As the fire died down, on their own initiative they cleared away the embers, and heaped earth over them; then they dug drains, and in a very short time the site looked like a deserted garden. It was something de Bruijn had not thought of telling them to do, and he was very pleased at the result. Propaganda was doing good work, and the people were getting the right idea about the Japanese.

In the morning, as they broke camp, they looked sadly at the carrier pigeons. They were no longer of any use to them as messengers, and they had only been brought along to use as food. So far there was no trouble about fresh meat, because two sheep had been sent to Koemopa, four goats to Masiga, and two pigs to Oewagimoma. It was feeding time for the birds, and they fluttered and cooed in their boxes. The men's hearts softened; the birds had served them well, and the thought of killing and eating them did not meet with anyone's approval, so the traps were opened and the famous fliers were given their freedom.

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Next day Koemopa was deserted. Most of the people had gone to Oewagimoma, and the others had followed the *Kontolulle* towards the range. The latter party journeyed on until they came to a good pass over the mountains, where the Ekaris, who had promised to carry supplies over the range as far as Dautali, in the country of the Migani tribe, accomplished good work. But now the difficulties were beginning. These Migani people were not accustomed to carrying, and it was not easy to persuade them; but the job had to be done, even though it was not always easy to handle them. At first the Dautali people were afraid and not inclined to be very friendly, but when they heard de Bruijn speaking their own language they began to be more amiable, and their confidence was gained when Apalapaloe and Zegelegaloe, the two Migani girls, told their story and assured the people that all was well. By nightfall they were quite won over and even brought presents of sweet potatoes and sugar-cane.

While the party was at Dautali, nine Bearoni men from Beura, who had made a journey to Enarotali to sell salt, came in very frightened and anxious to get home. When they reached the lakes and discovered that the Japanese were there they were so terrified, particularly by the stories they heard, that they threw their salt bricks into the lake and turned for home. They brought a horrible story with them.

All the way in from the coast the Japanese had kept on asking, "Where is the *Kontolulle*?" and each time the only answer they got was:

"*Ani ewo*" (I don't know).

This was natural enough because when the Ekari people are afraid and don't want to answer a question, they always say "*ani ewo*." It is the same too if they are lazy, or just don't want to be bothered. Only patience and understanding can break down the barrier, and the Japanese had neither. They didn't even know the language, let alone the psychology of the people, so they merely got angry and shot

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the Papuans through the head. Others they tried to force to answer by torturing them, and rubbing their victims' legs with brands of burning wood.

They were all the more annoyed because they were short of food and had hoped to find supplies at Enarotali. They had lost a lot of their stores because of their own ignorance and stupidity, by packing them in bags instead of tins. As they moved up the trail so they moved towards the rain, and in the mountains, except for rare seasons, it rains at some time almost every day. The bags were useless and the food spoiled. Their advance party too had met with difficulties because they had not come prepared for any trading, and had brought no cowrie shells, axes, or knives, apparently relying on a possibly friendly clan, or more likely on the simpler method of helping themselves. Consequently, the first thing they did was to rob the gardens, and kill the pigs, sheep, chickens, and goats. The Bearoni people said that every animal at the lakes had been killed.

When the time came for de Bruijn to move on from Dautali, he and his party left, as usual, in the early morning. There was a long day's trek ahead of them, through rolling grassy hills, bushland, and strips of jungle, broken only by occasional gardens, but they pushed forward, knowing that at the end of the journey there would be a comfortable rest-house, for at Wandai still remained the log hut which had been the headquarters of the Protestant Missionary, Rev. Mickelsen, and which he had occupied until within a few days of his evacuation from Enarotali with the rest of the party.

It was seven o'clock at night when they came into Wandai. The last stage of the journey had been made in the dark, stumbling along the narrow track. Mickelsen's log cabin was a paradise. He had even left some supplies, including welcome tins of milk, but they were almost too weary and sore to eat, and fell asleep almost at once, thankful to be free, for one night at least, from the hospitality and fleas of a Papuan hut.

*Berger and Rudy Gout—Kaboeroean finds the party—Music at night—Birds of Paradise—Solace in the jungle.*

"OH, FOR the persuasion of Soalekigi. Oh, for Soalekigi to talk to these people."

De Bruijn was trying to get carriers. All day he had talked like an orator to try to persuade these Migani people to carry for him, but they were very unwilling. Perhaps it was pride, or it may have been that they had never done such work before. Even when they finally consented they only went a part of the way, then they refused to carry any farther, and turned back home. From that point others had to be persuaded, and the long sessions of talking began again. De Bruijn felt confident that if only they could reach Masiga it would not be so bad, because his previous visits had shown him that the chief of the village would give his co-operation. Kaboeroean, the Indonesian police boy, had already gone ahead, with some of the members of the bodyguard.

The bodyguard, as formed by the District Officer when Enarotali was evacuated, was an armed force, designed to work and co-operate with the police for patrol work and protective purposes and control of the carriers. Itimobile, a son of Weakebo, became commander of the guard, and his second-in-command was a lad known as Battery. It was not his proper name, but for some reason or other it suited him, and he was known by no other. Battery could boast of some experience. Not only had he accompanied de Bruijn on the June–August 1941 expedition to Beura and Ielop, but after that trip went to Fak Fak, where he stayed with the Assistant

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Resident Magistrate from September 1941 until February 1942. By that time Battery had had enough, for in February the Japanese were bombing Fak Fak, and he was in a shelter when a bomb fell on the Assistant Resident's house about twenty yards away. Battery came home.

Both Itimobile and Battery were fine jungle soldiers and very good shots. They and the other members of the bodyguard were very proud of their rifles; they felt that they gave them a superiority and power over the other tribes. Usually it is the Migani who think themselves superior to the Ekari, but the possession of rifles gave the bodyguard (who were all Ekari boys) a superiority over all, at least so they thought. They even put this into effect when supervising the work in the gardens, and would curse at a Migani gardener who was not working hard enough—a thing they would never have dared to do without a gun in their hands.

Twice, when out on patrol, some of the bodyguard, without de Bruijn's knowledge, had killed a pig because they were not satisfied with the manner in which they were received by the inhabitants of a village. After all they were the *Kontolulle's* bodyguard, and as such honour and homage had to be paid to them by the Migani people. If de Bruijn had not calmed them down at times they would have become quite fanatical about their importance. For all that, they were fine lads and did a grand job.

Nurwe, now a soldier, but not a member of the bodyguard, came in from Oewagimoma, bringing word from Gout that the Japanese were approaching from the west, and in accordance with their prearranged plans he would arrive next day at Wandai, making his way to Masiga. Corporal Berger, who had been out on patrol somewhere in the region between Koemopa and Oewagimoma, was in a dangerous position. In a desperate effort to prevent him from being cut off, Gout sent out a message to him to try to work his way through to Wandai. So far as was known, Berger, with

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a few men, was still out in this region and trying to carry on.

For the time being "Oaktree" was all at "sixes and sevens." De Bruijn himself had to push on, and the best he could do was to leave a letter at Wandai for Gout telling him what arrangements had been made for carriers, and that he was pushing through to Zanepa to have a conference with the chiefs. He had Berger on his mind too. Gout, therefore, was to join de Bruijn at Zanepa and take over transport arrangements to Waniboega another day and a half's journey beyond Zanepa. While Gout was doing that, de Bruijn would turn back and try to help Berger.

And so de Bruijn started to move his supplies from Wandai to Zanepa. He admits that it was "a difficult job," which, on the face of his own story, must be a considerable under-statement. There was only one member of the body-guard, Itimobile, to help him. For a time they managed to arrange for about forty carriers to work with them, but they were an unreliable and unwilling team. Some were slow, and the leaders had to wait for them to catch up; others threw their tins away and deserted, and the tins of precious food had to be retrieved. For long stretches on the trail de Bruijn and Itimobile had to do the carrying themselves, until a few more men could be found.

They crossed the Moiaboe River, and followed along the bed of the Iwaboe, fording it many times, and then had to walk through the precipitous Iwaboe Valley, partly composed of a shale composition, which made the descent very difficult. Yet in the thick of all these difficulties de Bruijn had time and feeling for beauty. As he stopped and looked down the valley he became quite excited. For the time being all his worries had gone. Again, for the first time since August 1941, he saw his own Mount Hindaminda, as magnificent and as lovely as ever in its splendid isolation.

A little before noon they arrived at the small village of

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Buguloro, where they rested while waiting for more carriers. De Bruijn, clad in shorts and jungle boots, mud-caked and weary, sat in the shade of a mountain pine. Presently he heard the voice of excited people approaching, and down the trail came a crowd of people, coming from the east and moving towards the village. He made a movement, but sat there and watched them approach.

"What's the trouble?" he thought. "What is happening now, that they are so excited?" And as they came nearer he saw something strange about the appearance of one of them. What was it? He looked like a Papuan, and wore his *koteka* and carried his string bag, just as any other man, and yet there was something different. As they came closer this strange man saw de Bruijn sitting there waiting. With a shout of joy he bounded forward, falling upon him in an embrace and crying with emotion. Only as the man came upon him did de Bruijn recognize his own man, Kaboeroean. When some of the excitement and emotion had died down, de Bruijn tried to find out what it was all about, but there were such outbursts of laughter and crying that it was difficult to piece the story together. It appeared that Kaboeroean had heard a story from some of the Migani people that the *Kontolulle* had been wounded by the Japanese and taken prisoner at Wandai. Then Kaboeroean had said:

"That is bad. I must go and liberate the *Kontolulle*," and he had discarded his clothes, donned an Ekari *koteka*, hung a bag from his head just as the people do, and gathering about sixty volunteers from the population, all armed with bows and arrows, set out on the march to Wandai to free him. Kaboeroean also had a few hand grenades in his bag. Then, to their great joy, as they came to Buguloro they saw him resting peacefully by the tree. It was a grand meeting, and a very timely one, because Kaboeroean had so filled his volunteers with enthusiasm that they acted as carriers for the party and went with them on the last stage of the journey.

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After crossing the Hiaboe River and ascending the north-eastern wall of the river valley they came to Zanepa, perched on a ridge, a picturesque hillside village looking down upon the Kemaboe.

Yet, strangely enough, when they came there the place was deserted. Where were all the people? De Bruijn could not understand it, for he already knew the Chief, Mundigibuwi, who on previous visits had been very friendly, and was expected to come forward with a great welcome.

Presently a few men appeared from the forest and de Bruijn explained to them who he was. Then they told him that Mundigibuwi had heard stories about the Japanese coming, and as he didn't know who all these men were crossing the river on the approaches to his village, he told all his people to gather their possessions together and retire. When the men took messages back to Mundigibuwi, and he knew it was the *Kontolulle* who had come to Zanepa, there was no longer any doubt about the warmth of his welcome. Immediately he caused the news to be circulated amongst his people. They emerged from their hiding-places in the jungle, and a stream of men, women, children, and pigs came out on to the narrow tracks and poured into the village.

In the midst of this scene Gout arrived from Oewagimoma, so there was more rejoicing. The "Oaktree" party had come together again, with the exception of Berger, who, with his handful of men, was still somewhere out in the unknown.

Like many of the mountain chiefs, Mundigibuwi knew the art of hospitality, and he personally insisted upon the party using his hut that night. It was very generous of him, and everything he had was laid at their disposal. But they were not alone, said de Bruijn:

"The fleas! Never anywhere in all the mountains have I seen so many fleas! There must be millions of them."

Yet, in spite of this, they spent a very pleasant evening. Gout, who was a man of many accomplishments, produced



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his mouth-organ, and he was a good performer. Except for those fleas, it was a perfect setting for music. The Zonggonao village of Zanepa, high up on the hill above the river, looked right down the grand Kemaboe valley. The still mountain air was crisp and clear, and sweet with the scent of pines. The darkness of the night was only broken by the quiet glow of fires inside the huts. In Mundigibuwi's own hut the flickering fire silhouetted the black bodies of the people, as they sat in a circle with the Chief assuming the dignity of host. Amongst them sat de Bruijn, happy and content, and Gout playing, playing, playing, until one by one they dropped asleep. The music ceased and the circle was complete: the gentle rhythm of recumbent figures only broken by the two white men as they turned to scratch.

Next morning, a much flea-bitten Gout left for Waniboega to await supplies. It was planned that when these arrived some of them should be sent on to Bilorai, which was the site of a 1941 bivouac, and approached only by means of a pass through the mountain range, the lowest point of which was 7,200 feet.

As Gout went forward, de Bruijn turned back with the object of finding Berger, for nothing had been heard of him since Gout had abandoned Oewagimoma. After one day's travelling from Zanepa to Wandai, de Bruijn was relieved to find that Berger had just arrived there. The Corporal had been near Tuga, somewhere in the region between Margrietdorp and Oewagimoma when the people gave an alarm that Japanese were approaching. Hastily he buried some of his supplies in the jungle and, thinking there was no time to do more, threw the rest in the river. Unfortunately, that particular alarm proved to be false, and it cost him most of his supplies. However, his retreat was necessary, and on receiving Gout's message he made his way to Wandai and there met de Bruijn as he came in from the east. The last remaining goat in Wandai provided them with fresh meat.

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Two days later Berger went out to the village of Dendai, a three days' walking trip where some tommy-gun ammunition had been stored. In the meantime de Bruijn went to Dautali to try to get some information about the Japanese from the people there, but he found that they had all gone away to a pig feast. The entire village was deserted, and might remain so for several weeks, so his trip had been in vain. He turned back to Wandai.

At about an hour or two's distance before reaching the village, de Bruijn sat down to rest. In a cool, heavily timbered spot, with glimpses of a clear blue sky between, the spreading branches gave a welcome shade; there was quiet and solitude and peace, and as he sat, almost dozing, a tree began to pulse with life. Along a great bough were splashes of lovely yellow as birds of paradise began their dance. They were all of the *paradisea minor* species, which are quite rare in the interior. The male birds were in full plumage, and for a long time he watched their graceful movements and their clean plumes, shading from buttercup yellow to cream, as they danced and swayed and spread in all their glory. He recalled a quotation which he wrote in his diary:

.. "*Balsemige luchten waarin dartle paradys vogels zwijmen van vermaak*" (Balmy skies wherein frolicsome birds of paradise swoon with joy).

Suddenly he felt tired. For many days, ever since they left Margrietdorp, he had been walking, walking, walking, and he was weary of the eternal ordering and planning, arranging for carriers, and making speeches to the people. The peace and quiet of this place called to him and beckoned him to stay and rest. It had thrilled him when he first saw it in 1939. He felt he must see more of it, and roam and rest at will, and revive his parched soul with great draughts of the beauty around him. It welcomed him as a friend and irresistibly drew him. The call was so strong that he could not go back to the village yet, but he could not stay alone. Nor did he

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want a horde of chattering people. There was Berger. He loved these things too, and was good company, sympathetic and understanding. So he sent a message to Berger to join him. Together they "took holiday," and for a few days wandered together in this strange unknown land that could be so friendly to those who loved it. It folded them in the softness of its embrace as though it felt their need. "How sweet, how passing sweet, is solitude."

*Boejani, Secret Agent No. 1—Arrival of Joseph—Metakipame's hospitality—Burial customs—Attending a Bora Mindia—Dominggoes—Medical service—De Bruijn receives Netherlands Cross of Merit.*

THE TINY village of Doboronani nestles on a hill to the west of the Izaboe River. It is a beautiful spot, looking down the tree-covered slopes to the wide sweep of the swiftly flowing Kemaboe. The people were happy and very friendly, and when they heard that the party no longer had any rice, they came with offerings of sweet potatoes. De Bruijn had paid a visit to the village, and accepting the hospitality of its people stayed there overnight. On the following afternoon Boejani appeared.

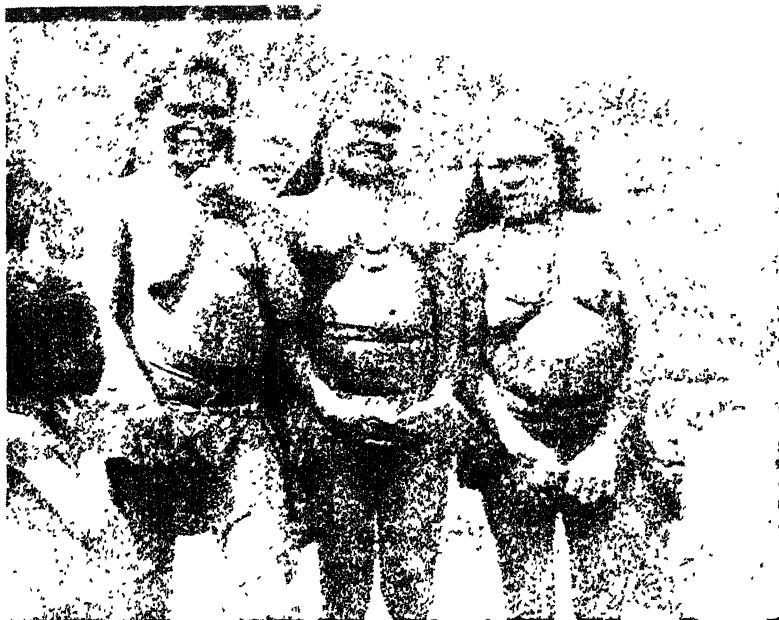
Now Boejani was a clever and trustworthy Ekari who had served the party well by undertaking intelligence work. His constant activities in this field were so successful that they earned him the name of Secret Agent No. 1. His method was to stay with de Bruijn for a few weeks, then, having been given his instructions, he would go back into the Wissel Lakes locality and mingle with the Japanese. They accepted him and let him roam about without hindrance. To them he appeared only innocent and friendly. They allowed him to enter their camps, and whenever he came in he shook hands with them and laughed and chatted, listened to their talk, and stored it away in his memory. Then after a time Boejani would disappear as suddenly as he came, and the enemy assumed that he had gone back to his people. But once clear of the Japanese camps the boy made his way with all speed to

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wherever de Bruijn happened to be at the time and gave his report. His news was, of course, given verbally, but Boejani's memory was good and his information always accurate.

On this occasion he had a sensational story to tell. He had been on his way to Lake Paniai, and on the trail had met Joseph, the former *Bestuursassistent* at Oeta, who had been persuaded with others to go to the Japanese at Fak Fak. It appeared, according to Joseph's story, that he was not at all pleased with the Japanese. He had seen men beheaded, tortured, and shot, and had no liking at all for their ways. Eventually he learned that they intended to occupy Enarotali and to capture de Bruijn. All this time Joseph had not lost his devotion for the *Kontolulle*, and now he saw his opportunity to make his escape and laid his plans accordingly. He accompanied the invading party as far as Enarotali, thus assuring his safe journey as far as the lakes. On his arrival there he stayed with them for one night, and then made his escape and set out to look for de Bruijn. But the young Joseph—he was then still in his 'teens—was not to have an easy time. He had no weapons of any sort, and was wearing only a shirt and shorts. He did not even have shoes, nor did he reckon upon meeting Boejani. Joseph first followed the trail to Margrietdorp, only to find the place abandoned, but it was near here that he met Boejani, to whom he told his tale. Boejani, however, lived up to his name of Secret Agent No. 1; he was not to be fooled, and was taking no chances. He had heard stories of how the Japanese used their spies, and this man who had lived with them might easily be in their employ. So Joseph underwent a close interrogation. It must have been a strange sight, and certainly was a unique one, to see a Papuan cross-questioning a *Bestuursassistent*, but Joseph had no option and stuck to his story. When he had learned all he could Boejani hurried back to de Bruijn.

"The *Bestuursassistent* is at Margrietdorp," he panted.



THE THREE WIVES OF METAKIPAME.



MUMMY HOUSE,  
containing the body of a two-year-old child of Metakipame



SERGT. JOHANNIS LATUMAKULITA.  
 "The best of the 'Oaktree' party" (see p. 164).



The Ekari people wore their wigs and carrying bags.

"He has come from the Japanese and is looking for you. I am afraid he is a spy and you had better come and kill him. Sir, it is better to have him shot. Let us go and kill him."

"No," said de Bruijn, "I will not do that. We will go and see him and find out what he has done. If what he told you is true, he will be able to give us valuable information. He will be more useful to us alive than dead."

"No, sir," persisted Boejani. "I think it would be better to kill him."

Next morning de Bruijn and Boejani left for Wandai, and late in the afternoon of the same day they met two small boys, each about ten years old, who came into the village and said that the *Bestuursassistent* had made his way as far as Dautali, and was waiting there for instructions. Caution was still necessary, for there was no proof as yet that Joseph was not fooling them and that the whole affair was not a Japanese trap. So they adopted the unusual procedure of making a night patrol, leaving Wandai at about five o'clock in the afternoon and arriving at Dautali at four in the morning. Joseph was sleeping. When he was awakened his delight at seeing de Bruijn was so genuine that their fears of a trap were soon dispelled. Nevertheless, he was closely interrogated, and everything he said tallied with the story he had told Boejani. As his story unfolded he gave extraordinarily useful information about the Japanese forces at Amboina, Ceram, and Temika, and such intelligence as no one else had been able to get out. Thus it came about, through the young Joseph, that, as de Bruijn's party was the only one in the field, "Oaktree" unwittingly became the first Netherlands East Indies Intelligence force in New Guinea. When the N.E.I. Government in Australia received this information they were so highly delighted that they enthusiastically replied:

"Bravo. Your intelligence material of highest importance."



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It was all very satisfactory, and clearly some sort of celebration was called for, so at the first opportunity all the party met to honour the occasion. Celebrations meant a lot to break the monotony of their daily life, and there was usually some high-light in the proceedings. This time there was a little ceremony, during which the pet goat was led in and solemnly christened "Bravo."

Joseph was very scornful of the Japanese, and he told of their lack of stamina. Some, he said, even fainted as they climbed the steep hills on the trails. He told, too, of how they had looted the Resident Magistrate's headquarters at Amboina, and of their lack of organization. They possessed only one map of the Oeta trail, and that an old one made by de Bruijn in 1939. They had found it in the Resident Magistrate's house.

They talked of these things as they walked back from Dautali, coming along the Izaboe River, and following along a bed lined with stones, and clear, fast-running fresh-water current. Presently they came upon one of New Guinea's phenomena. In the middle of the stream was a thin spout of water, and on wading over to investigate it de Bruijn discovered it to be a salt-water spring. It was only a few inches across, and the water, which was quite salt, spurted up like a tiny fountain and fell to mingle with the fresh-water current. In all his wanderings in New Guinea and his examination of salt springs, this was the only one ever found in the middle of a stream.

After the return to Zanepa de Bruijn moved on another day and a half's march to Waniboega, where he knew the Chief of the village. This man, Metakipame, was a fine fellow and a good friend, and like Mundigibuwi, set himself out to be hospitable. He thought it would be a good idea, and quite in keeping with his position, if the *Kontolulle* had his own house, so Metakipame had one set aside for the sole use of de Bruijn and his party. It was indeed a kindly

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thought, and Metakipame was well pleased with himself, never realizing that to de Bruijn the situation of the new hut had one serious drawback. Not more than twenty yards away were two "dead" platforms, on which putrefying bodies lay. De Bruijn had slept in some strange places, but this was the first time he had shared a cemetery where bodies lay in the last stages of corruption.

The usual procedure among the Ekari people is to keep the body of the deceased in the hut for about five days, during which time, of course, putrefaction sets in and the stench becomes almost unbearable. Even at the height at which many of the mountain villages are situated, where the nights are cold, the days are still warm, with a good deal of humidity, and there is, of course, always a fire in the hut. At the end of the five days, or whatever time is set aside, a stretcher of bark and poles is made, and the body is carried to a "dead hut," consisting of a platform built several feet above the ground. On this the deceased is laid and the decomposed matter gradually drips away. In the event of a chief or important person being laid to rest, a house is built on the platform, or a canopy erected over it, so that the "dead hut" resembles a large pigeon-loft. Later, perhaps, the skull may be removed and put in a smaller hut, but the other bones are left to lie until the dogs scatter them in the jungle.

At Waniboega one day de Bruijn saw some sweet potatoes, yams, spinach, and other vegetables stacked on the roof of a hut, and a woman explained to him:

"They are for my little son, who is dead. *Ganeo imboe*. It is a pity he is hungry."

With the Migani tribe, however, custom differs, and the deceased bodies may be kept in their former dwelling-place for two or even three months. They are left by the fire to dry out, and appalling as the stench may be, the people live and sleep in the hut by the dead. On one occasion de Bruijn saw

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one that had been there for four months. The body, once a man, was quite dry, but the stink was beyond description. Eventually the people decided to remove the remains, but before doing so they peeled off the dry skin, put it in a little heap and burned it. Then they carefully took the bones away to a platform, where in due course the dogs acted as scavengers.

In some instances the remains of more important Migani personages, such as chiefs, are mummified by means of rubbing resin and salt into the body. It is then dried out by the fire until the skin becomes as hard as leather. It is then removed to a mummy-house, which is enclosed and has a gable roof, and is built in the trees. Near one village there was one of these, in which the body was in a perfect state of preservation. It was that of a grandfather of one of the chiefs, and it is estimated that it had been there for at least fifty years.

Where the deceased is a woman, the corpse is usually thrown into the river, and in almost all the big rivers the bodies of dead women may be seen floating on the current. A wife is very much the property of her husband, just as much as are his pigs, cowrie shells, and house. With the Migani people—never with other tribes—upon the death of a husband it is the custom for one of his wives to be killed with arrows. The only one who may be spared is a young wife if she is pregnant. Some people have said that these Papuans live a carefree existence. How can it be carefree when the women always have this fear of death hanging over them? A few may take it philosophically, but there are some painful scenes when, even though it is a tribal law, a healthy woman objects to having her life taken.

On enquiring into this horrible custom de Bruijn learned many strange things. One day he had discussed it with Soalekigi.

"Who has this right to kill a woman?" he asked. "Does

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it fall to the lot of a chief, or is some man appointed to commit the deed?"

"No," Soalekigi told him, "the wife of a dead man is always killed by a member of the family or by his best friend. For instance, *Memoeroe*, you are my best friend, therefore when I die you can kill my wife." De Bruijn, however, had other views on this matter, and as Soalekigi did not die, a delicate situation was averted.

But to return to Waniboega. While they were there, living in this not too salubrious atmosphere, one of the soldiers arrived from Masiga bringing in three goats and the remaining supplies that had been left there. Masiga was now abandoned, and there was no post left west of Waniboega, and no supplies in all that vast region except the dumps that had been buried by Corporal Berger. Of the three goats brought two were males, and the other, a female, was pregnant. She gave birth to two kids, a male and a female, but alas! a few days later the female kid was killed and eaten by one of the pigs. This was indeed a tragedy, because the party's supply of fresh meat depended so much upon the propagation of their small herd. It was no uncommon thing for the pigs to attack the small kids; especially did they like chickens, and once they had tasted blood they always came back for more. Therefore they are always to be found rooting about the banks of the big rivers where dead bodies may be swirled in from the currents. During the time at Enarotali a pig had to be destroyed because it had attacked and eaten thirty-six chickens.

The Migani people in the region about Waniboega were not so friendly as their chief. It was noticed that they were becoming suspicious and furtive, and were seen to be carrying spears instead of their bows and arrows. It was an unusual and disconcerting sight, because normally they carried their bows and arrows wherever they went, just as the white man carried a stick. Presently it became quite clear that they did

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not like the party living there, and one night there was even a fear that they might make an attack on the Post. A special guard was posted, but for three nights nothing happened. Then de Bruijn decided it was time to have a conference with the chief, and together they discussed the situation. It appeared that the cause of this unfriendly attitude was again due to their superstitious fear arising from the fact that the party wore clothes. Metakipame was horrified to learn that his people were so inhospitable, and he called them all together. He was only a young man, without the experience of some of the chiefs of other clans, but he had enough strength of character to control his people and to stick by his friends. His address to them was long and with an emotional peroration, to which he added much feeling by shedding copious tears.

"How can you think of killing the *Kontolulle*," he cried. "Don't you know he is our best friend? It is very wrong, and I am very angry and very sad that you should think of doing him any harm."

He shed more tears, and then continued in the same strain, emphasizing the kindness and understanding of the *Kontolulle*, the trust they must place in him, and that they must uphold the honour and dignity of their clan. It was quite a moving scene, and very effective too, because after that there was no further trouble.

The satisfaction of this day was capped by the receipt of a radio message from the Government advising that the convict boy, Boo, had been granted his pardon because of his faithful service. Although, unofficially, Boo had gained his freedom when he voluntarily became a member of the "Oak-tree" party, both he and de Bruijn were very pleased by the official recognition. There was also a message from Mr. van der Plas suggesting that rewards should be given to some of the members of the party, and as a result of this the Netherlands East Indies Star for faithful service was given

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to Tumahu and Honggoljan, both of whom had done exceptionally good work.

The only member of the party who was not happy was the radio operator. Poor Gout had gone down with a bad attack of dysentery.

On the 23rd June de Bruijn made a patrol with a few men back to Wandai for the purpose of cutting the bridges across the river. All the crossings were destroyed, with the exception of the one at Zanepa, which was left under the safe surveillance of the Chief, Mundigibuwi.

All through the account of de Bruijn's experiences as District Officer, the importance of making contact with the people is stressed. He had forcibly expressed his views in his outline for administration, particularly in regard to what he termed the period of orientation. This applied not only to first contacts, but also to the continuance of happy relations and maintaining the friendship and trust of the people. No matter what the region or the clan, this was always his first and last thought, and the foundation upon which all his work was built. It may be said of him that with these mountain people "he was a friend in sunshine and shade; of the humblest he scorned not one." Thus, in pursuance of understanding and orientation, he came to visit the *bora mindia*.

*Bora mindia*, which means the giving of presents, is a custom among the Migani tribe. The ceremony usually commences about six o'clock in the evening, and may last all night, and there is no special season for it. It may be held any or every night. Its object is that of courting, and at these meetings the young men and women find their mates, and in their own way plight their troth.

One evening de Bruijn entered a hut when the *bora mindia* was being held. Even though he was probably the first white man ever to witness this ceremony, his welcome was apparent, the more so perhaps because he had brought

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presents. He took his place among the people, and handing over his presents prepared himself to watch the ceremony for the first time. Here the young men and young women who were contemplating matrimony were gathered about him. They were from various clans, and came from a number of surrounding villages, because the Migani law provides that no man may marry a woman of his own clan. This is their opportunity to meet, to assess each other, as it were, and for the young men to choose a bride and make known their intentions. Outside the *bora mindia* they have little opportunity of mingling or of forming any attachment, nor do they often attempt to do so. The Migani laws are rigidly observed, and for the purpose of matrimony *bora mindia* is the sole accepted medium.

In the centre of the hut, as usual, is the fireplace, on one side of which sit the unmarried young women. Some of them are attended by their mothers, for it is all very circumspect. On the opposite side sit the swains, not necessarily unmarried, because they may have more than one wife, and if they wish to acquire another still use this meeting-place for that purpose.

When the scene is set the men begin to sing. It is a wordless song, more of a humming tune, accompanied by rhythmic movements. Presently a young man takes up a present which he intends to offer to the girl of his choice, and with a swaying snake-like action of his hand extends it towards her across the glowing embers. He has cast his die, for if his present is accepted the action amounts to a proposal of marriage and consent. His present may only be offered to the unmarried girl of his choice, and he is not permitted to be fickle and change his mind. But the girl by her behaviour might have been brought up in the good period of Victorian England. She acts with such a flutter of modesty and decorum. She really cannot accept his present! She does, however, permit herself to respond a little, and makes a

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similar movement with her hand towards the proffered gift. Backwards and forwards they move their hands, gradually coming closer again, all the time accompanied by the humming music. The inevitable moment comes when the fingers touch slightly, but the girl's are discreetly withdrawn. For ten minutes or more the play goes on, the hands meeting and being withdrawn again and again, until hers gently comes to rest in his, and acceptance is made. The young couple are betrothed.

De Bruijn was fascinated, and often attended these gatherings. In the evening, with little else to do, he would go over to one of the huts and watch a *bora mindia*. He always called it "Going to the Ball." There he would get to know the people and further gain their confidence. In a generous mood he would take fine cowrie shells and beads for the young men to offer as presents, but such trinkets as empty corned-beef tins were also very acceptable. Perhaps it was because of these things that he was always so heartily welcomed. Often if he did not put in an appearance they would send to his hut and ask him to come over and join them. Once he took Gout and Berger with him, but they wouldn't go again. They said there were too many fleas.

Sometimes there were incidents to mar the happiness of these gatherings, and this is the story of what befell one of the members of the bodyguard.

Domingoes was the jolliest of all the "Oaktree" party, just the sort of happy-go-lucky boy who easily falls a victim to the wiles of woman. He was a good talker, had a great sense of humour, and could imitate almost anyone or anything. They called him "the clown." He was such a favourite that, if anyone wanted to be entertained, they turned to Domingoes. Merely to hear him relate one of his stories would drive away a fit of depression, and often during the long evenings he entertained the whole party. He was a lad of some experience, too, for it was he who had been to



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Amboina with Soalekigi and Weakebo, so he had "seen life." He had yet to taste its bitter-sweet.

One day de Bruijn saw Dominggoes sitting alone on a log. Never had he seen such a disconsolate figure: every spark of merriment had gone, and he was bowed down as one bearing some great secret sorrow. De Bruijn went across and spoke to him, and by patience and persuasion got the boy to confide in him.

Dominggoes had fallen victim to a Migani girl, and was deeply, hopelessly in love. For ten days she followed him everywhere, and at night they met at the *bora mindia*, and during those days and nights all his good nature and charm came out in his sheer joy of living. Night after night he worshipped his idol, thrilled to the touch of her hand, and passed over his presents. First he gave his cowries, then his carrying bags—and these were fine possessions, for he liked nice things and had a rare collection of some of the handsomest red and white bags. Even his knife went. And then, when he had nothing left, the girl went too. He had nothing now to offer her but love, but she desired only material things, spurned his love, and left him disconsolate and destitute. Dominggoes, who a few days previously had been so proud of his possessions, had nothing but what he wore. It would appear that the gentle art of "gold digging" is known even amongst these primitive Papuan maidens. At any rate Dominggoes had to start life afresh, but he did not seek it at a *bora mindia*.

De Bruijn was now called upon to do physical healing as well as mental, and he had to act as doctor to the party and to the people also. The doctor had been evacuated from Enarotali, and none had taken his place. "Oaktree" was without any medical adviser. When they had abandoned the lakes, de Bruijn had taken all the medical supplies that were available; there was quinine, salvarsan for yaws, and yatren and emetine for dysentery, and he began to treat the people

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for their various sicknesses. No doctor had ever been in this region about Waniboega where the party was now based, and de Bruijn's attempts at treatment had a marvellous effect on the people. When they had yaws he gave them injections. The first one was watched with great interest, and in one week he saw an ugly open wound dry up. But the people thought that this was a complete cure, and he could not get them to understand that they had to have four more doses to finish the treatment. Within twelve months he gave something like two hundred injections for yaws, but his triumph was an intra-muscular injection given to a Papuan woman. Even the doctor at Enarotali had never been permitted to do this. When it was attempted or suggested, a woman would say, "No, no," and go away, or she may have stayed for the injection to be given under the skin, or in the arm, but the intra-muscular—no, certainly not. De Bruijn only did it once.

As he turned from that operation Gout came running from the radio hut. He was jubilant. A message had just come through announcing that Queen Wilhelmina had honoured de Bruijn by conferring on him the Netherlands Cross of Merit. That was on the 25th June, 1943.

*Papuan intelligence service—New skirts for the girls—A mouse feast—Arrival of Johannis Latumakulita—Berger's trouble with the carriers—Waiting for supplies.*

THE PAPUAN members of the bodyguard were very useful in doing intelligence work. Not only did they know the country, but they could wander about freely in their natural state, wearing only a *koteka* and carrying no arms, and if they encountered the Japanese, there was nothing about them to arouse suspicion. Furthermore, they did not have to carry supplies. They moved quietly about, and wherever they went could live off the land. They were keen on their work, and showed considerable initiative. Two of them, Koemopajoka and Amani, set off to the Wissel Lakes to get information about the Japanese movements. There was no certainty as yet as to whether the enemy intended to occupy the lakes as a base, or if they had merely made a raid in the hope of capturing de Bruijn and his men. Koemopajoka and Amani, however, soon found from their observations that it was obvious the Japanese intended to guard the lakes in case any plane should attempt a landing on Paniai. They learned too that in trying to get the people to help them the invaders had told them not to be afraid of the *Kontolulle*, because his "tribe" had all been destroyed, and he and his party had no supplies whatever and were reduced to eating their own excrement. There were plenty of similar stories, but Papuan intelligence was better than the Japanese, and help was not forthcoming as readily as the enemy wished. In their movements and behaviour in the interior they showed a peculiar

stupidity, not only in handling their own supplies, but in an entire lack of knowledge of the people and in making no attempt whatever to understand them. Nor did they make any effort to learn the language, but tried to introduce their own, even in referring to everyday things such as sweet potatoes, or axes, or cowries.

When Koemopajoka and Amani returned with this information, de Bruijn decided the time had come to train the bodyguard in the use of firearms, and although he did not have enough rifles for all, they began to practise with what they had.

Gout, at this time, was busy with the radio sets. In addition to the one portable radio there was also a set which required a small engine to recharge its batteries; but when the base at Oewagimoma had been abandoned the engine was destroyed, as there had not been enough carriers available to arrange for its transport. But Gout was a good mechanic, and somehow or other managed to fix up some sort of a contrivance to get the thing going again. De Bruijn continued to take lessons from Gout, because it was very important that he should know how to operate both radios. Later, when the three Posts were established—at Waniboega, Bilorai, and Sinigipa—Gout used one set and de Bruijn the other, and thus were able to keep in touch with each other.

The chief of a small village about an hour away from Waniboega wanted de Bruijn to move. He even offered to build a new hut in his own village if the *Kontolulle* would go and live there. He explained at considerable length how much better it would be for everyone concerned, because the Waniboegas were not good people. Thoughtful and generous as the offer appeared to be on the surface, its roots went deeper; the canny old chief was thinking more of the benefits to be obtained by the fact that having the party in his village would assure a steady and increased source of trading and income. But de Bruijn had met with this sort of

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thing before and he was not to be hoodwinked by such simple guile. Moreover, he much preferred to stay at Waniboega, where he was on the best possible terms with Metakipame, who by now had become most devoted, so much so, that he personally waited on the *Kontolulle*, and even brought hot breakfast to him every morning.

All sorts of domestic items were cropping up at the Waniboega base. Firstly there was a shortage of salt, and their low stocks would have to be conserved. To meet this need they began to bake their own salt bricks, just as the people did. The home-made bricks were not very palatable, but the men had to have salt, and there was no other means of obtaining it.

Then Apalapaloe and Zegelegaloe, the two Migani girls, had to have new skirts. Those they were wearing were indescribably filthy, and any description of the additional uses to which they had to be put is beyond mention. So skirts had to be bought for the girls, but in addition to the purchasable article they found that parachute cord, when frayed out, made a very attractive and more serviceable garment. By this innovation a new fashion was set for the Papuan girls of the central mountains, and the belles wore parachute-cord skirts with great pride. Later on, this fashion had to be stopped, because if the girls wore these skirts when wandering about the country and at any time encountered Japanese, the latter would then know, from the free use of the cord, that supplies were reaching the bases and, moreover, would soon get an idea of their location.

Apalapaloe and Zegelegaloe were very useful about the camp: "They did the washing, chopped the wood, but were very poor cooks."

On the 8th July a message was received from the Government that a plane would come over Bilorai and drop new radio sets and supplies enough for five men. De Bruijn had to reply that this was little help, because he now had

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fifty men to feed, and the Government must revise their plans.

"I have fifty men," he told them, "and they all need supplies as much as I do. I cannot send them away, because if I did they would all be killed."

The reply he received read: "Keep your bodyguard in honour and with you."

They had been so long now without receiving any supplies, even though they had not expected them, for they had been amply warned of the Government's inability to send planes, that feeding the party was becoming a great problem. An entry in de Bruijn's diary under this date (8th July, 1943) reads:

"I have for the first time eaten mouse. I didn't like it so very well."

The *kedejoewo*, or mouse feast, of the Ekari people is quite a festive occasion, but there was no cause for celebration now. De Bruijn ate mice because of dire need, and as he did so it must have been very difficult for him to obliterate from his mind the nauseating sights he had seen on previous occasions when preparations for a *kedejoewo* was in progress.

For the people a mouse feast is a grand festive occasion, and preparations for it may take two or three months, during which time they are all busy catching mice. Gradually, as the animals are brought in, they are placed on the ground in a heap and covered with leaves. Day by day more are added to the pile until there are enough for a feast. After a few weeks the condition and stench of that mound is foul beyond imagination. When the day fixed for the *kedejoewo* dawns, the people all appear in fancy dress, wearing skirts, beads, shells, great head-dresses of feathers and casuarina, and carrying strings of cowries festooned from twigs like candelabra. After the feast the men do the *waboe wainai*

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dance, which is a most extraordinary performance. It is seldom seen, and only once has it been photographed, and in all probability the pictures would never pass a censor. It is the only dance performed by these mountain people that has any tendency towards sexual excitement, and "tendency" is expressing it mildly. The men untie the waist cords that support their *kotekas*, and allow the tube full play as they career about in a state of frenzy. Perhaps mouse is an aphrodisiac. At any rate the result is not a pleasant sight, and it is, perhaps, the only known instance of sexual exhibition amongst a people whose normal moral code is so circumspect.

The eating of mice is not by any means confined to the *kedejoewo*. With many clans it is a regular and much-relished feature of their diet, and they set traps almost every night. For instance, Kaboeroean, the police boy, who originally came from the Celebes, was extremely fond of mouse, and much preferred it to a meal of sweet potatoes. But then Kaboeroean had strange tastes; he would never eat rice or salt, nor did he drink tea or coffee. At one time he killed a dog and ate it, and all the others were very disgusted. They had never seen a man do this before and did not like it at all.

(*Note:—*When last heard of, Kaboeroean was a corporal in the Papuan Battalion serving in Hollandia, and was giving his orders in Dutch. Three other members of the bodyguard, now also corporals, were with him.)

Across the range from Waniboega a base was now maintained at the village of Bilorai. Already part of the supplies had been sent there, and because of the suitable open country it was here that the promised supplies were to be dropped. The Government was on the job, and another message was received saying the plane would come. But Government plans, through no fault of their own, can be upset, and the party, keyed up with expectancy, watched in vain.



RADIO OPERATOR RUDY GOUT AT BILORAL.



Migani people bringing pigs to de Bruijn after the Sitoegoemina story.





KOROBIA'S MARRIAGE.

"The girl . . . clung tearfully to her mother" (see p. 188).



Domingoes (with rifle), Dodi on left with Migani carriers. Background, northern range at 9,000 feet.

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While they waited there came to the camp a messenger from Oewagimoma, a boy named Oeroebojoema. He had been given this name because of his peculiarly shaped nose, *oeroe* meaning a fruit and *joema* nose. To most of them he became known as Joseph, but he must not be confused with Joseph the young *Bestuursassistent* who had escaped from the Japanese. De Bruijn was having lunch when the boy arrived and handed him a letter. It had been given to him at Oewagimoma to deliver to the *Kontolulle*. The envelope bore a drawing of the Dutch flag in one corner, and in poor Dutch was written the strange address:

"In the name of her Majesty, Queen Wilhelmina, to the commander of soldiers of our Allies or other authorities at Wissel Lakes."

Puzzled and slightly amused, de Bruijn opened the letter. At the head of it the address was repeated, and then came the following, which is a literal translation:

"Honourable Sirs,

"Informs you with owed respect, J. Latumakulita, former writer to the *Bestuursassistent* of Napan, on his way to Wissel Lakes, that he is now leaving Wissel Lakes, and that he comes with this letter to your honourable Sirs with information as follows. It is now more than a year ago that the Japanese have possessed the Netherlands Indies. During this time when I have been working I have always been feeling to have together an alliance with soldiers in a fight for justice and freedom, and I have always been hoping that Holland or our Allies will win the war quickly, and when I read the proclamation of her Majesty the Queen to her people, dated 10th May, 1940, paragraph 3, with the symbol 'I and my government will also now do our duty. You do yours everywhere and under all circumstances, everyone at the place on which he is posted, with most extreme vigilance, and with that inward peace and surrender to which your mind enables you.' This beautiful proclamation is not only meant for the

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Netherlands people, but also for me. The tradition of this proclamation is fighting therefore, and I am still a soldier. I will fight until I am dead. During the time past I did not think and did not know that there were Dutchmen at Wissel Lakes, but in the month of April, 1943, a few Papuans from Napan went to the Jabi Mountains to buy tobacco, and when they returned they told me that they had heard from the Jabi people that there were Dutchmen at Wissel Lakes. When I heard this I immediately had a plan to come, like you and honourable sirs see, and I hope you will receive me and take me in military service for fighting. I wanted to go straight away to you, but I was afraid of the soldiers, therefore I have this letter sent earlier to you so that you know it, and I am waiting for your answer.

"I am grateful to you more than I can tell you when you receive me.

"God bless you and all of us, and together we will fight for our country and our Queen.

"Your faithful servant,

"JOHANNIS LATUMAKULITA."

Any strange message brought in had to be investigated, because there was always the possibility of it being a Japanese trap. This letter itself might be one, and nothing much was known about the boy Oeroebojoema, so, taking no risks, a watch was put over him. Even though he was an Ekari and guarded by one of his own clan, he was under such close surveillance that the poor boy was not even able to go to perform his natural functions except at the point of a gun.

De Bruijn left immediately to interrogate Latumakulita, and sent a bodyguard ahead to bring him in. They met him, but were over-enthusiastic in fulfilling their orders, telling him to come at once to the *Kontolulle* or he would be shot. The shooting part was entirely their own idea, but it mattered little to Latumakulita. He needed no persuasion; indeed, he was so happy at having made the contact that he gladly did

everything they told him. De Bruijn was on the hill above Zanepa when they met. Never, anywhere, had he ever seen such joy; Latumakulita chattered and laughed and wept so much that for a time he was almost uncontrollable. When he had quieted down a little, he began to tell his story, and de Bruijn questioned him closely, and found that he had known the boy's father, who was an Amboinese, and Rajah of Tanivel, in Ceram. Surely this could not be a trap, and talking to the boy, he said:

"If you are not a spy, you will be safe here with us."

"Oh, sir. No, I am not a spy."

"Very well, then, take an oath."

The others were all very amused, but de Bruijn dared not show any expression of his feelings at the incongruity of the situation. It was a serious matter, and so far as Latumakulita was concerned had to be treated as such. The little group stood on the rise of the hill above Zanepa, and in the midst, facing the District Officer, was a sturdy ragged figure with one arm raised, solemnly vowing loyalty and devotion to the name of Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina.

As his letter stated, Latumakulita had been employed as a writer to the *Bestuursassistent* at Napan, near Nabire, on Geelvink Bay, where the Japanese had made an air strip and placed about 400 men. Napan, in peace-time, had been a conceded territory, used by the Japanese for the production of resin, and when war came Latumakulita had been forced to work for them. They had treated him fairly well, but he had seen some horrible things done to others, and he was far from happy. Then he met the Papuans who told him that Dutchmen were at the Wissel Lakes and gave him an idea of the direction. Watching for a favourable opportunity, he bided his time, saved his rations, and then, stealing an old rifle and with half a tin of rice, he ran away.

All alone among unfriendly Papuans, and not knowing their language, scarcely knowing where he was going, and

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living all the time off the land, except for his diminishing supply of rice, and still carrying his gun, the boy tramped from the north coast towards the interior. Footsore, weary, and ragged, day by day he came nearer to his goal. It was a long and lonely journey, but at last he came within sight of the lakes, only to find to his intense disappointment that there were no Dutchmen there. The Japanese were in occupation. He turned away, following the trail de Bruijn had taken to the east, understanding sufficiently from the people that he might find the party somewhere beyond Zanepa. And then he came upon Oeroebojoema, and gave him the letter to take to announce his coming.

From the day of their meeting, Latumakulita made de Bruijn his idol. As this is written, in Australia, the boy is as a shadow at the side of his captain. His funny eel-like wriggle when he laughs expresses his joy. Happy and loyal, he is now a sergeant in Her Majesty's Netherlands East Indies Forces, his captain's right hand, and intensely proud of the Bronze Cross awarded him and of his campaign ribbon. There is a strong and touching affection between these two men. While going through de Bruijn's album one day I saw a photograph of Latumakulita, and beneath it was written:

"Sergt. Johannis Latumakulita. The best of the 'Oak-tree' party."

Irrespective of class or colour or creed, there are some men with whom one can feel proud to shake hands. Johannis Latumakulita is of these.

They had returned to Waniboega by the heavy trail running parallel to the southern bank of the Kemaboe River, and had been at the base only a few days when Gout was sent out to Bilorai with the radio. De Bruijn intended to follow him on the following day, but there was some difficulty in getting carriers. The chief, Metakipame, was away

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for about a week on a trip to the east country to buy pigs and do some trading, and without his friendly aid and influence the people were inclined to be hostile. In fact, it was hard to get them to work at all, and by the following morning when de Bruijn wanted to set out, very few had been engaged, so he decided to move on with those he had managed to get together and leave Corporal Berger in charge at Waniboega. Berger was to try to get other carriers and send them on with some of the bodyguard.

De Bruijn was only about ten minutes along the trail, mounting the hill above Waniboega, when he heard the sound of shooting. It lasted for about five minutes, and mingled with this was a noise of shouting and the Papuan's war cry. Then followed the rattle of tommy-guns, and the sharp crack of N.E.I. rifles, and from Latumakulita's stolen gun one loud boom like the sound of a small cannon. De Bruijn rushed back to find out what had happened. Berger was safe. He was very sorry, he explained, but he had had to shoot. The people didn't want to carry and refused to do so. Then they became openly hostile and one of them threw a spear. Berger replied by firing a few shots into the air, but the people were not going to be intimidated so easily and shot their arrows. Berger then fired with intent. Two men were killed, and the others, seeing he meant business, then retired.

De Bruijn gave instructions for peace to be made, and explained to Berger how it was done in the Papuan way. The people, as punishment for the trouble they had caused, brought him pigs, and he in turn gave axes and cowries to the families of the two men who had been killed. The breach was soon healed, and three days later there were more carriers offering than were needed.

At Bilorai they spent their days waiting for the much-promised plane. Day after day they spread out their ground sheet and placed the signals as arranged, and at 5.30 every

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morning lit smoke signals. Still no plane came over. Every few days a fresh message was received.

"We are coming soon."

"It won't be long now."

"We shall be in any day."

July passed into August, August into September, while they waited and anxiously watched the skies. Again and again an American Catalina had tried to get across the great snow-capped range, and each time it had been turned back by bad weather or heavy cloud. They could have crossed the mountains by flying higher, but would not take the risk.

The daily fires for smoke signals consumed a great deal of timber, and this meant much cutting and heavy labour, and they were working on the surrounding hills until they were almost cut bare, but even this provided an opportunity for a little back chat and a quiet joke. Signals were always received in code, and the method used was simple. Every three months or so the Government chose a certain book, one copy of which they used and the other was sent to de Bruijn. Those generally used were of the well-known English "Penguin" series, and messages were sent by reference to certain sentences. De Bruijn radioed:

"When are you sending a plane? Already we have burned up a whole forest to make smoke signals."

And the reply came:

"Not long now. Be cheerful," and referring to the "Penguin" code book, page —, line —,

"The destruction of Government property is forbidden."

On the 7th September, after two long months of anticipation, the Catalina came. After so many attempts to cross the range by flying the direct route from Merauke, they abandoned that idea and took the roundabout way to Wissel

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Lakes, and then turned north-east to Bilorai. Much as the supplies were needed, it was an unfortunate thing that they had flown over the lakes, because the Japanese there, watching the plane, learned from its direction the region in which "Oaktree" was working. Word had to be sent to the Americans at Merauke not to repeat a trip by that route, and later, when N.E.I. planes came in with supplies, they flew at 18,000 feet directly over the ranges in good weather or bad without ever a mishap.



*The great trade route—Papuan greetings—Cigarette making—Lolinduni Mala, the radio arrow—Metakipame "listens in"—Japanese ridicule American propaganda—Jungle Pimpernel.*

THERE IS always a certain amount of activity at Bilorai. The village is of considerable importance because it is directly on the main trade route, and consequently people are always passing through, or staying there for a few days to rest and replenish their food supplies. Moreover, it is in the country of the salt wells, and therefore in a thickly populated area.

Trading is a regular business with the mountain Papuans, and hundreds of people are continually moving along the trail in small groups, coming and going, buying and selling. Often they are away from their homes for eight or ten weeks or more at a time, sometimes staying at a village *en route* and then moving on again.

From the locality of the lakes they move out in a north-easterly direction, travelling to the north of the Araboe River, then crossing the Maratara Pass at 6,600 feet, until they reach the Kemandora. Then they cover the great valley of the Kemaboe, and beyond this come to the Kendea Pass at 7,200 feet, and move down through the Doegindora Valley, out over the Zatea Pass, another 1,200 feet higher, to Beura and Ielep, and so on over the range again into the valley of the Baliem. When they come to the last village before crossing a range the traders stay to purchase enough supplies to keep them for several days, for the ranges are uninhabited and offer no food.

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Since time began the central region had been unknown to white man. Only the mountain people knew its secrets, and those people were as strange as the country in which they lived or passed through. Only they knew the fertile valleys where food could be obtained, and where lay the barren unpopulated regions. Often shadows darkened the valleys, in which were deserted villages, abandoned because ghosts roamed there, the home of disease and evil things. Only the mountain people knew the extent of the great trade route from west of the lakes to the far-away Baliem valley. Their flat bare feet padded along the trail for days and weeks and months. In their own way it was as romantic to them as the Silk Road or the Golden Road to Samarkand has been to others.

No caravans have passed that way, bearing spices of Araby or the silks of China, only groups of Papuan men and women; but their trail is as old as the Golden Road, and to them, for trading purposes, equally important. A procession of people passes to and fro, moving in groups of ten or fifteen, walking in single file along the well-worn track. Young children and their mothers usually stayed at home, but it is quite customary for some of the wives to accompany their menfolk. They carried their supplies in beautifully made string bags, gaily coloured in red and white. Sometimes a little pig was put in too, for they took their pigs with them, or perhaps bought some at one of the villages. Generally the pig walked along, trotting at their heels like a dog, or, if inclined to be wayward, it was led by a cord of lawyer vine fastened to its neck.

Ekari people from the lakes locality, who are unable to speak the Migani language, take an interpreter with them. Usually he is a friend from another clan who has lived near the borders of the Migani region and can speak both languages. For instance, people living near Lake Tigi might take a man from about the Araboe, the closest region to the

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Kemandora, which is Migani territory. The long trade route passes through the lands of various tribes, firstly the Ekari, then the Migani, then the territories of the Daoewa and the Dem. In the Beura region is the Oehoendoeni tribe, and beyond that the Ndani, who inhabit the valley of the Baliem. The Ekari language is not known throughout the eastern regions. Migani is the *lingua franca*.

In the valley of the Baliem they find the main source of their trading—even for cowrie shells. When an Ekari or Migani is asked where cowries come from, they never know them as being from the coast, but will always say they come from the east, which, to them, means the interior.

It was important for them, and was equally so for de Bruijn, to know the formal greeting used by each different tribe. In each instance it amounted to the same thing, the equivalent to "Good morning, friend"; but the use of an incorrect form, or ignorance of the language, made a very bad impression and could lead to embarrassing results. The Ndani people, for instance, have their own peculiar form of greeting, which is quite unlike the characteristic Ekari and Moni custom of offering hands and pulling the knuckles, as de Bruijn experienced on his first meeting with Soalekigi. A Ndani man places his open right hand on the left side of his friend's back just below the clavicle. Both men do this while facing each other, so the action has the appearance of two men embracing. Girls and women to express their delight, after a long separation, have been seen to throw both arms around each other in the Western fashion.

All along the route the villages in the inhabited valleys offer opportunities for trade, one of the main items being tobacco.

The custom of smoking, which is prevalent, takes different forms among the Ekari and Migani people. Both tribes grow their own leaf, which is dried by the fire and then rubbed. The Ekaris take a large pandanus leaf, up to about a yard

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long, and use it in lieu of a cigarette paper. It is folded once, and the tobacco sprinkled along the crease, then it is folded again until it forms a cigarette about three feet in length, but unsealed. This they roll in a coil, and smoke it by lighting one end and placing the mouth to the unsealed edge and drawing. When they go out on long journeys they take a good supply with them. Weakebo was a very heavy smoker, and when he went to Amboina took a great coil of rolled cigarettes with him, enough to last throughout the length of his visit, which extended into a month. On the other hand, Soalekigi, who was with the same party, didn't smoke at all.

For trading purposes the Ekaris press the tobacco into a hard plug, and when it is required to roll a cigarette the plug is scraped with the thumb-nail, or with a sharp stone.

The Migani custom is quite different. Their cigarettes are in short lengths, not much longer than ours, the tobacco being rolled in a small leaf, perhaps a piece of banana leaf, or even dry grass. It is smoked just as we smoke a cigarette, and they roll a fresh one each time as required. There is, of course, no Western influence in this custom: it was probably in use long before white men knew what a cigarette was, and that, after all, is only a matter of about a hundred years; and what is a century in a timeless land?

The trade route may lead through a deserted village. Such abandoned sites are frequently seen, left as they were when a ghost apparently decided to haunt the village. The whole population moves and leaves him to it. There is no attempt to burn the huts or demolish anything: they just walk away to another place, which may perhaps be merely half a mile or so up the hill, and there build new homes and establish another village. No one ever goes near the old one. It stands entirely deserted and left to the ravages of time.

On these long excursions both Ekari and Migani men sometimes acquire another wife. The bride may be one of

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the Ndani people, for though the Ekaris never marry Migani girls, they may take a Ndani if their choice lies that way. Similarly, the Migani, to whom it is forbidden by tribal law to marry one of their own clan, may marry with the Ndanis if they wish.

A curious feature of the Ndani territory is that many of the houses are rounded like a beehive, and built within a maze. They are completely surrounded by a series of brush and wood fences, about eight feet high, and in the innermost fence there is only one opening leading to the hut. All the other surrounding fences are constructed so as to form a perfect maze, and can be just as confusing. They are, of course, for protection against marauders, though the fear of ghosts may also have something to do with it.

All the time while de Bruijn stayed at Bilorai these trading people were passing to and fro, and when they saw he was there would often remain for a few days. They liked to come to his hut and chat with him, and frequently brought with them valuable information, for which he gave them some cowries. They brought him pigs, too. They were always welcome.

Occasionally, when too many visitors came to the hut, it would be difficult to concentrate on the radio, particularly when messages were being sent or received, and the people insisted upon standing about excitedly talking and making a noise. The radio fascinated them; they called it *Manayuni*, which means, "speaking and listening." As was his method, de Bruijn would never have them ordered out, but it sometimes became necessary to use other means to persuade them to leave. One was to attach two lengths of electric wire to sticks as handles and give them to two of the men to hold. The shock was mild, but enough to make them rather afraid. *Lolinduni mala*, the radio or speaking arrow, was something they could not see and did not understand. If they wanted to stay in the hut they were told that they must hold the

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*lolinduni mala*, and one by one they quietly crept out, because they were not at all sure about this unknown power that entered their bodies.

The radio, at this time, was exciting, and the "Oaktree" men were eager for the news. An entry in de Bruijn's diary reads:

"26th July, 1943.—Received news that Mussolini has resigned. To-night we hold a feast to celebrate this first step towards the liberation of Europe."

A few days later Metakipame came to Bilorai on his way back to Waniboega after a trading trip to the east. As he strolled about the village one morning, Metakipame entered the radio hut. He was curious about this new contrivance, so they thought it would be interesting to put the earphones on him and watch the reaction. Metakipame, clad only in his *gosara*, sat on a box with the air of anticipation of unpleasant things, such as one might assume in a dentist's chair. The radio was turned on. As the "voice from the air" came to Metakipame, his expression changed from one of amazement to one of sheer terror. For a few moments he listened, and then with a wail of agony cried to the unknown one:

"Friend. Friend. You must not speak to me. I am here all alone and do not understand your language or what you say," which was just as well; the song coming over the air at that moment was a soulful dirge, in which a young lady moaned, "I have nothing to offer you but love."

Perhaps something of this experience stirred Metakipame's being. That night de Bruijn lay sleeping. He wore a wine-red pullover, for it was exceptionally cold. At somewhere about midnight he was awakened by someone gently shaking him, and he roused to see Metakipame leaning over and whispering:

"Sir. Sir. If you will give me that pullover I will give you a woman."

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De Bruijn assures me that he still has the pullover!

The magic of this radio did not end with the experiences of Metakipame. The Japanese got hold of the story, and at a later date used it in a broadcast attempting to ridicule American propaganda. In a news commentary given in English and broadcast to Australia from East Djawa, on the 18th August, 1944, they said:

"The other day the following nonsensical story was spread by American propagandists. When U.S.A. marines landed on Guam, they found an American radio man who had hidden in the jungle for two years evading the vigilance of the Nippon troops on Guam Island. This story seems to have gone down with the American and Australian public quite well, and, consequently, the Dutch, in order to show the mettle of their men, came out with an even more preposterous story. They invented the Dutch gentleman, Jean Victor de Bruijn, who had kept the Dutch flag flying and evaded the Japanese troops, although encircled all round, in the mountainous sector of Dutch New Guinea. The American naval man on Guam merely kept hidden, but the gentleman in New Guinea did more than that. According to the Dutch war correspondent, van Sluys, who has every right to become a member of the international liars' club, Mr. de Bruijn was the possessor of a magical radio set supplied by neither electric currents nor batteries, which faithfully kept on working for him for two long years. By means of this set, Mr. de Bruijn kept up to date with the news and made his plans accordingly. The Japanese troops knew where he was, for van Sluys reports they called on him to surrender, but he just sent back messages of refusal, the gallant fellow that he was, and the Japanese troops were never quite able to catch up with him. Of course the gentleman would not have been able to exist without food, but by means of his magical radio, or by other means, he called upon an Australian airman who subsequently provided him with food. Although the Dutch gentlemen in Australia did not know, and could not know, what de Bruijn was

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doing in his mountain fortress, they awarded him the Cross of Merit, and the medal and an accompanying parchment were dropped down to him by an Australian plane. . . ."

The rest of the commentary was on the usual lines that Dutch soldiers, sailors, and airmen were being trained everywhere in neutral countries, but were never allowed to see action!

The Dutch war correspondent, van Sluys, was responsible for giving de Bruijn the name of "Jungle Pimpernel." In his article van Sluys gave an outline of de Bruijn's experiences in the central mountains, and told how:

"In the dark days of 1942 he [de Bruijn] heard one after another of the Netherlands Radio Stations close down as the Japanese wave of occupation engulfed more and more of the Netherlands Indies Archipelago. He switched his radio set over to the B.B.C. and San Francisco for news from the outside world, picturing for himself how the Japanese would be first brought to a standstill and then driven back with increasing speed.

"He completely disregarded the Japanese letters urging him to surrender and doggedly remained at his Post. *Like an elusive Jungle Pimpernel* he escaped the Japanese patrols which were sent out to catch him, and he continued to establish new Netherlands Indies Posts as nerve centres in his vast, wild, even partly explored districts of unlimited boundaries. . . . In those rugged, wild tablelands he built an outpost for the Netherlands Empire amongst 100,000 Papuans still living in the Stone Age."

"Jungle Pimpernel" loved his people and was beloved of them. In his album, beneath a photograph of Weakebo, he has written the line from Kipling's poem—"There was no one like 'im." All those primitive Papuans might have applied the words to their *Kontolulle*.



*Papuan rites—The mina andia, the bailija—A conjuring trick—The legend of Sitoegoemina.*

AT KOEMBALAGOEPA, about half an hour's walking distance from Bilorai, de Bruijn had his first experience of the ceremony of *mina andia*. He had received word that his old friend the chief Moegoehane was dead, and paid a visit of condolence to the village.

The mournful dirge of the intoning of the *mina andia*, consisting of a continuous wailing and crooning over the dead, reached him as he entered the village. There was no mistaking the hut in which the body lay.

Moegoehane was surrounded by his wives and family, and the people stood about crying and chanting their songs for the departed. It was a bizarre scene: the gloomy interior of the hut was filled with people, all of whom had painted their faces and bodies with clay, which changed from white to yellow as it dried. Even the body of the dead chief was heavily plastered. The *mina andia*, as de Bruijn was to experience later, can be a very beautiful thing, but on this occasion it was a doleful ceremony. It did not end when the crooning ceased, but developed into a funeral wake, and three pigs were killed and roasted for the feast. De Bruijn, always eager to learn more of the customs of these people, stayed in the village until the rites were ended, and he took the opportunity of warning them not to kill any of the wives of the chief, otherwise bad luck would come to them. Although it was quite contrary to their tribal law, they heeded his warning. Perhaps this was the first time in all their history that a widow had been saved from death.

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De Bruijn's second appearance at a *mina andia* occurred soon after, when that grand old chief, Metakipame, sent a pathetic message saying that his little daughter was very ill, and would the *Kontolulle* come over to Waniboega and save her. When de Bruijn arrived at the village and went to the hut where the little girl lay, he saw that it was too late to do anything for her. She had developed pneumonia and already was unconscious. Within a very short time she was dead, but he stayed there with her parents and tried to comfort them.

It was a sad time, for he was as fond of these people as they were of him, and he was deeply touched by their simple faith in his power to save. In the gloomy shadows of the interior of the primitive hut, the bereaved mother sat crooning the *mina andia*, swaying to and fro and weeping over the little body. It was a very loving and tender scene, and apart from his participation as a mourner, he learned something which in all probability no other white man has ever been privileged to experience. In the good days he shared their joys, now they accepted him as one of their own, and permitted him to plumb the depths of their sorrow. By so doing he has been able to give us a lovely Migani crooning song of the *mina andia*, perhaps the only one ever to have been written down and translated.

"E Koembae, ara dolapanoeanda,  
e meureu lienggio.  
Andigo ama kendorama,  
noea noe doroma.

Hi hi, ji ji.

Ma oenoendia deno  
paita paite, koembae,  
paita paite,  
Ara dolapanoeanda."

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("Oh, darling, I love you so dearly,  
I am mad with sorrow.  
It was I who fed you at my breast,  
Drink again now.

(Crying) Hi hi, ji ji.

Why do you sleep now?  
Wake, my darling,  
Wake up. Wake up.  
I love you so dearly.")

From the point of view of studying the ceremonial customs of the Migani people this was indeed a rich period. About a month later, de Bruijn attended another solemn rite known as the *bailija*, an important ceremony for the laying of ghosts. Korobia, the young chief at Bilorai, came to his hut and told him that for the next two days there would be no people about the village, because they were going to do *bailija* against a certain ghost, whom they called Zege, who had been haunting the village, making the people ill and causing them to die.

For the two days during which the ceremony lasted, everyone stayed indoors. They were not even allowed to go into their gardens, otherwise Zege would come in them. Moreover, if any person vomited during that time, it would be a sure sign that he or she had become a victim of the ghost, and would either have to be killed or have their ears cut off. Even children are included; their ears are cut off too, but they may not be killed until they are grown up.

The *bailija* upset de Bruijn's programme. He had arranged for two of the Papuan bodyguards to go to Waniboega, but the men pleaded with him not to send them until the time of confinement to the huts had expired. They were very nervous, and afraid that if they went out on patrol and vomited while on the journey, they too would be killed. So

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they asked to be allowed to remain indoors with all the other people. De Bruijn went into the village, but there was not a person in sight. Everyone remained in their huts and fasted until the two days had expired. Then they came out and joined in the customary feast.

Almost immediately after this, Metakipame was in trouble again. This time it was his son who was ill, and the old chief was deeply concerned. Already he had killed two pigs, but the sacrifice had no magic healing effect upon the young man. Surely some ghost was at large at Waniboega, and something had to be done to divert his attention. Metakipame knew of a man who had a reputation for making *bailija*, so he was invited to come to Waniboega to try to help. It was to be a very full and elaborate ceremony, and de Bruijn was asked to attend. On his arrival he was beckoned into the hut in which the performance was to take place.

Out on the roof of the hut sat the *bailija* man, and above him, from two poles, like a wireless aerial, stretched a length of lawyer vine. In his hand he held a bunch of twigs and leaves. From this elevated position he spoke to the ghost, pleading with him to go away and not trouble the sick boy any more. Over and over again he repeated the request. And all the time he was talking, down below, inside the hut, the little gathering of relatives and friends stood grouped about the ailing boy. They had taken a long length of lawyer vine, known as the *baiholo*, and placed it on the floor until it completely encircled them, one end of the vine leading out through the doorway.

When the *bailija* man had finished talking to the ghost, he climbed down from the roof and joined the people in the hut. Taking one end of the *baiholo* vine, he made a noose, into which the sick boy and all the male members of the family placed their hands. After this the same performance was carried out by the female members. Then followed the male visitors, and finally the female visitors.

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Presently a pig was led in, and the *baiholo* placed about its neck. Two men took the animal by the legs and held it above the head of the patient, while a third deftly shot it through the heart with an arrow. The pig was still held in the air while its warm blood poured down upon the boy, and was rubbed into his body. The noose was then removed from the neck of the animal, and each person present tied a knot in the *baiholo*. Another pig was brought in and led to a corner of the hut. It too was shot, but not killed outright, and the wounded animal ran squealing and bleeding about the hut until it fell. On that spot was the ghost. Then the *bailija* man took a stick and tapped the place, again appealing to Zege to go away and not to worry the sick boy. The final scene in this strange ceremony is the cutting of a length of the *baiholo*, in which a loop is made, and placed about the neck of the patient. He must wear it as long as he is ill and throughout the period of convalescence. When he is quite recovered he may remove the loop, and it is then hung in the hut, even though it may be of no further use, or possess any special power. The *bailija* is finished, but there is still the inevitable feast to follow. Two more pigs are killed, but they must be cooked outside the hut, and the fires freshly kindled. On no account must they be lit from the fire inside.

The *bailija* man, well content with his work, received payment of two cowrie shells, one of which he wore attached to his little finger. No doubt Metakipame thought it a fair charge, for his son made a speedy and complete recovery. De Bruijn thought that in all probability the boy had an attack of influenza, and quinine and aspirin might have been just as beneficial as all this elaborate ceremony.

After the *bailija* was over, the carriers were again available, and De Bruijn set about establishing a base at Sinigipa (a third Post), farther away to the east, down by the junction of the Doraboe and Boeliaboe Rivers, so that if the

"Oaktree" party should be attacked by bombers or invaded by the Japanese, they would still have another base with supplies to which they could fall back. Moreover, Sinigipa was on the route to the Rouffaer River, which, it had already been decided, would be an emergency evacuation route. This plan, though not thought likely to be necessary, had to be prepared to meet a possible contingency, and supplies sent forward accordingly.

Sinigipa lay to the east of Waniboega, beyond the boundaries of the Migani tribe, in the land of the Daoewa people. Although the Daoewas had their own language they also understood Migani, but with his customary thoroughness de Bruijn soon compiled a word list of Daoewa, so that he could meet the people and to some extent understand their own tongue.

At Bilorai the boy Nurwe had an experience similar to de Bruijn's with the wonder doctor. Nurwe was suffering from toothache, and for treatment went to an old man who had the reputation of being the village doctor. The wonder healer took a leaf and folded it, placing it against Nurwe's cheek. Then he said a few things and made mysterious signs, all intended to chase out evil spirits, and especially to conjure up the necessary air of magic. After the passes and the mutterings he removed the leaf, and unfolding it produced therefrom the top of a broken arrow. Nurwe, when relating the story, swore that he had first inspected the leaf and there was nothing in it. Moreover, he asserted his toothache had gone.

With these people it is quite impossible to tell to where a simple conjuring trick, or anything savouring of magic, may lead, and to what extent it may influence the population, let alone affect the lives of the members of the party. An instance of this was experienced in the camp when one of the boys, by way of entertaining the people, showed them a simple conjuring trick. It was one of those easy sleight-of-

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hand things done by inserting a match in the hem of the handkerchief and placing another in the loose folds. The "conjurer" then invites one of his audience to break the match in two or three places, it being, of course, the one inserted in the hem. Then with by-play and much abracadabra, the handkerchief is unfolded and lo! the match is revealed unbroken.

The trick proved a great success with the people, and they asked for it to be done again and again. In their enthusiasm they brought in presents of sugar-cane. It was marvellous! One man said he would bring a pig—but apparently was too awestruck to remember his promise. The animal never arrived. Still, they sat about in a circle, and asked for more. Only one elderly man was silent. He sat and watched, intent and thoughtful, pondering all the time on this strange mystery. Presently, without uttering a word, he got up and walked away. After a few minutes he was seen returning with a piece of sugar-cane about six feet long. Handing it to the "conjurer," he said:

"Do it with this."

And then came unexpected and far-reaching results. Because the Migani people could not understand this trick, it savoured to them of black magic, and for some time they were obviously worried. Finally, after much consideration, they approached the *Kontolulle*. After all, he was their counsellor and friend. So they came to him and commenced what developed into a long philosophical discussion. To de Bruijn this was perhaps the most interesting and illuminating talk he ever had with any of the mountain people. During the course of their conversation they asked him many questions about life after death, all of which he tried to answer with patience and within the scope of their understanding. But still they feared the black magic. If he could do these things, they said, could he not also give them some medicine to make them eternal? Then their talk took an astounding

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turn, and led them to the point of their discussion. They told him the story of Boembamba and the woman Sitoegoemina. He, de Bruijn, had heard some scraps and different versions of this story during his 1941 visit to Beura and Ielop; but had never known it in full or realized its implications as now. A solemn little group sat about in the *Kontolulle's* hut, their dark faces lined with worry, watching the younger man, and hoping that through his understanding they might find the consolation they sought—the answer to their problem. This is what they told him:

Boembamba is the so-called magic country where their predecessors now live. It lies somewhere to the east—"the east" being always the land of mystery.

"Long, long ago," they said, "in far-away Boembamba, once lived a woman named Sitoegoemina. She had four brothers, and between them they possessed a very fine cowrie shell, known as the *Simbai Sombai*. This was the largest cowrie shell ever known, and no one has since seen anything like it. Sitoegoemina was very fond of this cowrie, and so covetous of it that every day she tried to persuade her brothers to give it to her, but always they refused. One day, unable to resist the temptation any longer, Sitoegoemina stole the shell and ran away.

"Secretly and alone the woman travelled until she came to Dogindora, and then went over the mountain pass at Baelolano until she reached the Kemandora. Here she turned to the south-west and made her way to Doemandora. She was now in a very sparsely populated region, and being very hungry searched about for food. One day, while she rested, a taro plant arose at her feet, and from it she received nourishment. Thus revived, she walked westwards from Doemandora, and came to the place where Lake Paniai now lies, and at the spot where she put down her feet another magical thing happened: a great lake rose about her.

"Sitoegoemina then continued her journey away to the



south-west, over the Oriaidimi, and below the pass where she crossed the range there is still a large stone with a mark like a footprint upon it, and this is said to be the footprint of the woman Sitoegoemina as she journeyed on into the country of the white people. Farther and farther she went until she came to 'Soerabaya,' the land beyond New Guinea, and there," they said, "she is still living with the white people, and is still in possession of the stolen *Simbai Sombai*, which explains why all the cowries come from the white people."

De Bruijn tried to explain to them that according to their story Sitoegoemina was eternal.

"Then," they answered—and here was the crux of their problem—"the white people and all the Migani people must have the same ancestors, and therefore we are all *Sitoegoeminasao*, all of the same race. Is it not so?"

"It is so," de Bruijn assured them, feeling that if he or they cared to delve far enough back, there was more than an element of truth in the theory. At this assurance, relief came to them at once. They became very excited, and kept repeating with obvious delight:

"We are all *Sitoegoeminasao*. The white people and the Migani people are all *Sitoegoeminasao*. We are all *Sitoegoeminasao*." As a tangible expression of their joy they brought the *Kontolulle* a present of twelve pigs.

The story, however, had repercussions more far-reaching than this pleasant episode, for on many subsequent occasions, whenever there was any sign of trouble, de Bruijn would say to them:

"Why do you do that? Why do you not want to help me, when you know we are all *Sitoegoeminasao*?" and with this reminder their fears would be allayed and they would go away happy.

*Short of food—Apalapaloe refuses to wed—Korobia's marriage—Still no plane—The Queen's birthday.*

"6TH AUGUST, 1943.—Every day waiting for the plane that does not come. To-day received a curious message. . . ."

Following the usual practice, Headquarters in Australia continued to send coded messages in Dutch, but on this day de Bruijn received one which he could not understand.

"What has happened?" he exclaimed, as he attempted to decode it. "Have I made a mistake, or has someone gone mad?"

He began again, then realized that the sender had taken extra precaution, and, lest the message should be picked up by the Japanese, had without advice sent it in French.

"Ah," said de Bruijn, "if they are so careful I must take precautions too," so he sent his reply in Latin. But at Headquarters the joke was not appreciated. In fact, it caused much consternation. No one in the office knew any Latin, and they had to take the message to the University to have it translated. After that all messages were sent in Dutch.

It will be gathered from this diary entry that the supply position was again becoming serious. They had almost given up hope of a plane coming in. The situation was now so acute that de Bruijn sent word to Corporal Berger, who was at Waniboega, to make a trip to Tueka, north of Koemopa, to try to recover the supplies he had buried there when he evacuated that region about three months earlier. Berger

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made the trip without encountering any unusual difficulties, and after two weeks, while the rest of the party anxiously waited, he came back with a very welcome quantity of stores.

During this time rifle practice became a regular part of the bodyguard's routine, and almost daily shots could be heard echoing down the valleys and cracking from mountain to mountain at 9,000 or 12,000 feet high. To the people such echoes were not at all unusual. In the jungle country, lying so very quiet and still under the great canopies of moss-carpeted tree-tops, the silence is often rent by the terrific report of a landslide or the crash of a great tree whose top has become over-burdened by its rain-sodden mass. Like the sharp sound of rifle shots, the echoes resounded along the ranges.

The food shortage could affect the little community in quite a number of ways. At this time de Bruijn wrote:

"There was a scene in the camp to-day. The chief of the Migani village of Zoratapa has asked if he may marry one of our girls, Apalapaloe, but his attentions do not find favour. He is a very old man and already has five wives. Apalapaloe is very indignant."

It was not until a few days later that de Bruijn found there was more in this proposed match than met the eye. It savoured of conspiracy. They had been looking for suitable country in which to cut air strips for a small plane to land but no suitable place could be found anywhere in the region, and it became obvious that any planes that might get through to them would have to drop supplies by parachute. It was disheartening, especially as all stores of tinned meat and fish had been used, and they had no meat in sight except the remaining goats, now reduced to two. Some time previously, de Bruijn had ordered that one of their three goats should be killed, but the man who carried out the execution made a mistake and shot the only nanny, so there

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would be no more kids, and nothing to replace the two remaining goats when their turn came. These, however, they dare not kill yet, lest there should be a desperate need at some future date. De Bruijn and his men were again compelled to eat mice, and he has already said how little he relished that.

Strange as it may seem, this situation was responsible for the fervour of the chief's wooing of Apalapaloe. He came again and asked permission to marry the girl, and this time he offered to give ten pigs for her. But Apalapaloe was so annoyed that she ran away, and ten members of the body-guard had to be sent out as a search party. A jungle knife was offered as a prize to the first boy to find her. For two days and two nights they searched the jungle, and eventually some of the Ekari boys discovered her hiding in a little hut which she had built for herself. They were so angry with Apalapaloe that they bound her with cords and led her back to the camp.

Then the real cause of the trouble was revealed. It had been instigated by some of the Ekari members of the party who, feeling the pangs of hunger, had tried to persuade Apalapaloe to marry the old chief.

"Why don't you marry him?" they argued, "then he will give us ten pigs and we can all have fresh meat." And so they kept worrying her, and backed up the chief, until in desperation she fled. Then of course they were angry with her because she had frustrated their scheme.

During this meatless period, however, help came in an unexpected way. The *Sitoegeoeminasao* story was circulating freely amongst the villages, and wherever it was told the people were so highly delighted that they brought in presents of pigs. Thus the party again had meat, and Apalapaloe was spared the indignity of becoming the sixth wife of a very old man.

Marriage seemed to be in the air, and de Bruijn with

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Radio Operator Gout was invited to attend the marriage ceremony of Korobia, the gay young chief of Bilorai, to a girl whom he had met at a *bora mindia*. Unusual photographs were procured of a part of the ceremony.

The family of the girl having duly approved of the marriage, all was made ready for the ritual. It was like an opera, commencing in friendly byplay and growing in intensity. Sometimes feelings became so heated that a ceremony ended in tragedy.

The girl, acting the part of a modest damsel, clung tearfully to her mother, protected by other members of her family, while the young man made his advances. After some minutes of this pretence, Korobia, laughing and eager, thought it time to claim his bride in earnest, and began to use force to drag her away. Even though she wanted her man, the girl still wept and clung to her mother, and the play went on until it became a veritable struggle and a tug-of-war between the bridegroom and the bride. De Bruijn, as an interested spectator, had been successful in taking his photographs, but at this stage the struggle became so fierce that Gout, unaware of the language and custom of the people, rushed in to intervene. Not only did he spoil what might have developed into a good fight, but he prevented de Bruijn from completing a set of photographs which would have been unique.

The occasion of the marriage of Korobia may have incited some of the members of the bodyguard to look about for brides. The men were wearying of the celibate lives they were forced to live. One day, one of the Zonggonao men from Metai, the former village of Soalekigi, asked permission to marry a girl from Waniboega. He had met her at a *bora mindia* and she was a nice girl, well built and full breasted, and she had shown her willingness to marry by accepting the boy's presents. Four of the members of the bodyguard and the two girls, Apalapaloe and Zegelegaloe, were Zonggonaos

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—all the others were Ekaris. Sometimes the Ekari boys caused trouble by objecting to the two girls remaining with the party. They would bring bad luck, they said, and whenever such a disturbance occurred, it took quite a lot of talking on de Bruijn's part to pacify them and assure them that all would be well.

"13th August, 1943.—Still waiting for the plane. One month has passed."

One of the bodyguard came in to report that the people from Boelage, of the Migani village, about two hours away, said they didn't like the party staying in Bilorai, because their clothes were stinking and the smell was making the people ill. They showed signs of becoming troublesome, so de Bruijn made a visit of appeasement, taking with him as ambassadors a number of Bilorai villagers, because formerly there had been war between the two clans. At first they were shy, but eventually were persuaded to come along, unarmed, and peace was made. Again the *Sitoegeominasao* story, though it was becoming a little wearisome by frequent repetition, proved to be providential, and as soon as it was explained to the Boelage people that they, the Miganis of all their clans, and the white people were of one great family, they caused no further trouble, and presented de Bruijn with a number of pigs. Once more sorely needed fresh meat became available.

"18th August, 1943.—A message to say that a plane will arrive to-morrow and drop eleven parachutes and eleven dumps. . . ."

"20th August, 1943.—Still no plane. A message to say that it could not get over the range on account of bad weather. . . ."

"22nd August, 1943.—Berger arrived back from Tueka with supplies. Also brought intelligence. . . ."

The news that Berger brought back was that an Ekari chief of the Paniai district had been given a lot of presents

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to work for the Japanese, and it was becoming difficult for intelligence to be maintained in that region. On learning this de Bruijn sent a message to Headquarters suggesting that, if possible, a few bombs should be dropped on Enarotali. Before he left the lakes there had been some argument with a village chief named Idantawori, from Oeweboetoe, on the western shore of Lake Tage, who even then had been co-operating with the Japanese. At that time Idantawori was arranging to hold a big pig feast, and de Bruijn ordered him to cancel his arrangements, because the occasion would attract hundreds of people to the district, and provide an excellent opportunity for the Japanese to make contact with them. The Chief agreed, but some months after de Bruijn had left the district Idantawori broke his promise, and Berger brought word that he was again making preparations for a feast. This news was one of the reasons for de Bruijn's request for a bombing raid. It took place a few days later, but it was some time before details of the result leaked through. It was known, however, that when the bombs fell on Enarotali, Idantawori, away in his village, was terrified. The noise of the explosions, he felt sure, could only be the angry voice of the *Kontolulle* upbraiding him, and he promptly cancelled all his plans for the feast.

"24th August, 1943.—Still waiting for the plane. We will have to tell the *Sitoegoeminasao* story once more, because we must have more pigs. . . ."

"26th August, 1943.—Began training the men for a parade to be held on the Queen's birthday. Quite a lot of pigs have been given, so we have decided to honour the occasion with a feast. . . ."

"31st August, 1943.—The anniversary of Queen Wilhelmina's birthday. . . ."

It was a grand day and an historic one for the village of Bilorai. Never perhaps in the history of the Netherlands

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Empire has so strange a gathering met in so remote a place. Activity began at the rising of the sun. De Bruijn despatched the customary formal message of greetings through the head of his department. The police tidied their uniforms and polished their rifles, and the buzz of chatter and excitement increased as the people arrived from the various villages. They came from far and near, down the hillsides, and along the valley trails, until a collection of about four hundred Ekari, Migani and Ndani men, women, and children were crowded about the little village.

Close by the flagpole a platform had been erected and decorated, and as de Bruijn took his place on the stand, the procession moved forward. Apalapaloe and Zegelegaloe, wearing new skirts and carrying gaily decorated bags, ceremoniously bore the flag. The police and bodyguard were led by Gout, who presented them to the *Kontolulle*. They looked very smart, and were keenly conscious of the importance of the occasion. The company stood at the salute as the flag was hoisted. De Bruijn inspected the lines. "Stand at ease." "Stand easy." Then the speeches began. It was a long business. Because of the mixed races de Bruijn had to speak in four languages. First he addressed them in Dutch, then in Malay, then Ekari, and finally in Migani. As most of the people had never had any contact with the West, they were astonished to learn that their great white chief was a woman. That was something they had never heard of before. Then de Bruijn found himself in difficulties as he tried to tell them what a birthday was, for that again was something they could not know, having no idea of age in the term of years. (On one occasion de Bruijn had asked Soalekigi his age, and the old chief, who was then about sixty, said: "I don't know. Perhaps about sixty moons.") So de Bruijn thought it would be more within the scope of their understanding if they showed their loyalty to the Queen by holding a *bailija* to drive away all fear of ghosts.



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"To-morrow," he said, "I will give a *bailija* in honour of our great white chief, and I want you all to come."

Then the great feast was held. The loyal toast was drunk, and they all sat down to an orgy of pigs and rats, sweet potatoes, yams, and many other things brought in and prepared for the occasion. The surprise of the party came in the form of a pudding. There was much excitement about it, because it had been made by the *Kontolulle* himself. It was his first—and last—attempt. The ingredients of this famous pudding were custard powder, ground coffee, butter, sugar, maple syrup, and peppermint oil. Its consistency was that of clay.

"It was horrible," de Bruijn confessed later; "but I ate some, and so all the others had to eat it too. They watched me as I tried to chew it, and when they thought I wasn't looking, turned their heads and spat it out.

"Then we all danced. I and the other Europeans, the police and the bodyguard, and all the people danced together and capered round and round the flagpole. It was a wonderful scene; everybody was so happy and so enthusiastic, but I had to stop it at about eleven o'clock, or it would have gone on all night."

Many a monarch has been honoured by strange subjects in strange ways, but surely the picturesqueness of this scene must have been unique, and certainly would have deeply moved Her Majesty and heartened her in the days of her refuge.

Next day they held the *bailija* to keep the Queen free from the fear of ghosts, and that event was so popular that three days later the people came again and asked for another *bailija* to be held to drive the ghosts away from their own villages. He agreed, and so all the people came again, bringing with them many more pigs for the feast. But the first thing they noticed was the bare flagpole.

"Where is the flag?" they asked.



THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY (1).

"He addressed them in Dutch, Malay, then Ekari and finally Migani"  
(see p. 191).



THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY (2).

"Then we all danced . . . and capered round and round the flagpole."



“JUNGLE PIMPERNEL”  
—de Bruijn, with Dodi, outside his hut at Bilorai.



THE “BIG DROP.”  
“We have everything we want. It is just like a Christmas party” (see p. 203).

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De Bruijn would only have the Dutch flag hoisted on special occasions, such as the Queen's birthday, so for the *bailija* and to please the people he ran up the Royal Netherlands Indies Airways flag. It was one they kept to use as a signal to incoming planes, and a flag not known to the Japanese, but it satisfied the people.

*The "big drop" arrives—Enter Dodi—Capture of spies, their interrogation and execution—Boejani leads raid on the Japanese—Joseph crosses the Delo Canyon.*

THE MORNING of the 6th September, 1943, dawned, a lovely morning of crisp and balmy mountain air. The trees and vivid jungle growth glistened in the early sun, and the smoke signals rose in straight columns into the clear-blue sky. On the cleared strips the ground sheets and signals were spread. This was the long-awaited day of the "big drop."

At 6.45 a.m. the Catalina was seen heading towards the valley. It flew over the open spaces where the signals had been made, and circled them two or three times. Then it lost height, and roaring over it at a speed of about 130 miles an hour, dropped the first two parachutes. The Migani people watched excitedly. They had never seen a parachute, and showed their agitation in the usual way by tapping on their *gosaras*. They saw the 'chutes open and the loads land close by a strip. Then two more were dropped. The excitement reached fever-pitch, because these two failed to open, and they fell with a terrific thud. Their specially fitted bumper springs caused them to bounce high off the ground, and they bounded about like balls. Unfortunately, these were two new radio sets, and they were completely wrecked. Altogether there were eleven parachutes and fourteen dumps dropped; much of the stuff was damaged. The rice was packed in only one thickness of bag and exploded when it landed, scattering the precious grain far and wide. The same happened to some of the other dumps. Eagerly they gathered the bundles

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together, but when they unpacked them they could not withhold their disappointment. Perhaps Headquarters had done their best according to a limited knowledge and had supplied what they could, but there was a lamentable lack of actual requirements. There were wet batteries without any acid, an engine without any fuel, boots without hobnails, and there were no cowries. However, they did receive, among the many and varied things, a quantity of Australian seeds, so they set to work and made extensive gardens, and before long had flourishing crops of beans, peas, tomatoes, cabbages, and corn.

The pleasure of this welcome relief was increased by more good news. De Bruijn's next diary entry reads:

*"9th September, 1943.—Italy has surrendered—the first of the European countries. A great day, which we celebrate by having a good meal. . . ."*

And then came Dodi.

"For a long time," said de Bruijn, "I have felt the need of a companion, so I have bought a dog. He is only a pup, white with a few black spots, and I call him Dodi, the Ekari word for dog. When I called him he came to me, and I stood him up on his hind legs. Horrors! His stomach was covered with fleas. As he stood there looking at me, armies of them were running up and down. Never have I seen so many fleas on any animal."

So Dodi was sent to the wash and cleaned and powdered, and when he had overcome his first shyness he became very attached to his master. For weeks and months he trotted about the village and along the trails. He took the final fearsome trek and, faithful until the end, gave the companionship required of him. But Dodi was not so popular with the men. Before his acceptance as a member of the "Oaktree" party he had learned some unpleasant habits, one of which was to visit the mouse-traps set every night by the

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bodyguard. When they went in the morning to collect the mice, Dodi had already been there and left nothing but a few messy pelts. Not satisfied with that, he would then wander to the river-bank in the hope of discovering a nice dead body. The men wanted to kill Dodi, but his master forbade that.

*"13th September, 1943.—Supplies getting difficult. We need to buy a lot of sweet potatoes and bananas for the bodyguard, and are running short of cowries. . . . Bad weather. No sun. A lot of influenza, and the people come asking me for medicines. They want another bailija to be held. I gave them quinine pills, and they went away quite happy. . . . Enarotali bombed again. . . ."*

After each bombing raid on Enarotali, de Bruijn made a point of going to the different villages to see the people. He found that the bombing was good propaganda for the party. It was interpreted as a sign that the Allies were becoming stronger and the Japanese were becoming weaker, because they could not retaliate. He also made a trip to Waniboega to see what was happening there and stayed a few days in the village. By this time Dodi was accompanying de Bruijn everywhere, so he went to Waniboega too, but disgraced himself on the way by leaving the trail, and eventually was found on the river-bank devouring a corpse. He was led back to the trail, but life was full of undreamed excitements, and in the exuberance of his joy he kept dashing ahead, thus announcing de Bruijn's approach—which he did not always wish to be made known.

On the way to Waniboega de Bruijn met some people who had come from Lake Paniai, and they told him about the bombing of Enarotali. They said three Papuans had been killed, but did not know what the Japanese casualties were, because they were never allowed to see the results of the raids. De Bruijn arrived at Waniboega at about midday. An hour or so later he was sitting in one of the huts talking

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with a party of thirteen Papuans who had arrived from the Wissel Lakes. Three of the men were Ekaris from Kebo, the others were from the village of Koemopa.

While he was talking he noticed something strange about the Kebo men. Usually when the people came to him they were only too eager to talk, but these were restless, and anxious to move on. There was something furtive about them. He kept interrogating them, determined to find out what was the matter. He asked them about Enarotali, and they told him it had not been bombed, which he knew was a lie. Not only had the three men whom he had met on the trail that morning told him of it, but he had had official notification from Headquarters. He didn't trust them at all, and as one of the Koemopas seemed a bit simple, de Bruijn thought it would be a good idea to question him first. This man told him that the Japanese were at Margrietdorp and were making contact with the population. They had instructed the son of one of the chiefs (the son turned out to be one of the three Kebo men) to make a trip to find out where the *Kontolulle* was and report back to them. For this he had been given axes, knives, and cowries. The Koemopa men were allowed to go free, but the three Kebos were kept in the hut with a guard placed over them.

De Bruijn said: "I felt sure that these men were spies, yet I had no proof. It worried me, and that night I prayed to God ('Yes, I am a Christian,' he interpolated) to send me some evidence of their guilt, so that in the morning I should not accuse or punish them unjustly.

"At about three o'clock in the morning," he continued, "I was awakened by the noise of a scuffle and a shout. As I jumped up one of the men leaped towards the doorway. Berger, who was on guard, held him by the foot. I told the man that now I knew he had been lying, and that the Japanese had given him presents to find me so that they could come in and try to capture or kill me. The man was



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very frightened and repeatedly cried, 'No, no, no.' Then pointing to one of the others said, 'He did it,' and that man, accusing the third, said, 'No. He did it.' And so it went on, each denying his guilt and blaming the others. Then one said: 'Don't tell the Toean, or he will kill you,' and it soon became quite clear that they were all implicated. Gradually I got the story from them, and found out, among other things, that the Japanese had found some of the supplies we had buried at Margrietdorp, including one of the three hiding-places of our guilders. In the morning the three men were taken to the hills about half an hour's walk away and I had them shot."

After this de Bruijn called all the Migani people together and told them what had happened and explained the reason for the shooting. When the gathering had dispersed, the men got together. They were very indignant with the Ekari people for having permitted such a thing to happen, and agreed that in future the Ekaris should be excluded from Migani territory. From this time it became very difficult for the Ekaris whose trade route led that way. They could only pass through by paying a toll of knives or cowries, and even then it was made quite clear that they were unwelcome.

The shooting affair had made all the people, Ekaris and Miganis, more cautious, and it also had the effect of keeping them closer to their own villages, but as a consequence, when de Bruijn and Berger, soon after the event, made a patrol to Dautali to get some information, there was very little news to be had. The people who had gone out from Dautali learned of the shooting and promptly returned home.

The presence of the Japanese in the central mountains affected the people in many ways, and few were above turning it to their own advantage. Even one of the bodyguard, Oeroebojoema, seeking a new way of obtaining cowries, hit upon the bright idea of commercializing a prayer. Full of confidence he came to de Bruijn and told him what a good

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man the *goeroe* had been and how he had taught him, Oeroebojoema, to pray.

"He was a very good *goeroe*," he said, "and taught me to pray very well. If you will give me a cowrie I will show you."

"Very well. Here is a cowrie. Now let me hear you pray."

In a loud and fervent voice the boy began:

"Father of all, let the Japanese go back to Soerabaya, because the Paniai land belongs to us and to the *Kontolulle*. Let the Japanese go away, because my knees and legs ache from all the patrolling I have done. . . ."

It was enough. As an extempore prayer it was not a bad effort, and well worth a cowrie.

About eight days had passed since the three spies had been shot. It had been an unpleasant decision to have to make, and as de Bruijn still had it on his mind, he paid a visit to Waniboega to see what the people had done with the bodies. He was told that they had been taken to a "dead" platform in the jungle. Alone, he went to the place and found the staging, which had been built about seven feet from the ground, with a hood over it. The day was dreary and wet, and the forest was dark, eerie, and silent. Perhaps it was because of his mission, but he had never known the jungle to be so mysterious. He stopped within a few yards of the platform. There it was, much the same as many others he had seen, the strips of rattan hanging from the hood, and the entrance almost covered by vines. All that could be seen of the three bodies was one half-rotted leg protruding. And as he stood there he heard a sound. The platform trembled, the vines moved as though stirred by a wind, and the decaying leg swayed. But there was no wind: everything else was still and silent. De Bruijn didn't like it at all. Then it happened again: the growling sound, the trembling platform, and the swaying leg. He cocked his gun.

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"A gun is not much use against a ghost," he thought; "but you never can tell."

Ready to shoot, he quietly stalked round the hut. Suddenly there was a terrific growl and a scuffle, and what seemed to be a big body hurtled to the ground and disappeared, crashing into the jungle. De Bruijn is sure that in his terror he magnified its size. It was only a dog that had climbed to the hut by means of a nearby tree and was devouring the corpses. Three weeks later de Bruijn visited the place again. By then the platform had collapsed and nothing remained of the spies but three white skulls.

On the day of that eerie visit, when he returned to the village, there was a radio from Australia awaiting him. It read:

"The Queen asks to thank and express appreciation to all for presenting wishes, and special appreciation to de Bruijn and his men."

De Bruijn has never sought recognition. His whole attitude was that there was work to be done, but it cannot be denied he is human enough to be gratified to be thus singled out for special mention by his Queen. Her gracious act considerably helped to dispel the feeling of loneliness and the inevitable sense of disappointment that could not be avoided when promised supplies did not come.

Three days after this Boejani, Secret Agent No. 1, reappeared after one of his visits to Paniai. He gave an account of his visit to a Japanese camp and how he had shaken hands and talked freely with the enemy, gathering scraps of information as he moved amongst them. Then, Boejani said, one night when all was quiet he left the camp and went back to his own people. Calling them together, he enlisted about four hundred men, who were all armed with bows and arrows, and led them into revolt against the Japanese. The point chosen for the attack was Enarotali. The

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skirmish lasted through four days, but with only bows and arrows on the one side, and with ammunition on the other, it was an unequal contest, and ended in the withdrawal of the Papuans. The revolt started by about thirty of Boejani's men attacking two Japanese who were working in the gardens. Instead of firing on the Papuans the Japanese, even though they were armed, ran to the camp calling for help. As the revolt grew in intensity the Japanese used their guns, but, added Boejani, they were very poor shots, because in all that skirmish only six Papuans were killed. The disturbance had one good effect. It meant that in future the Japanese were afraid to go out on patrol without at least ten fully armed men.

Boejani also reported the difficulty he had in passing through Migani territory to bring his news, because the Miganis now regarded all Ekaris as spies.

All this information, which was continually being brought to de Bruijn, not only by his own men but by trustworthy Papuans, was passed on to Netherlands East Indies Intelligence Force at Headquarters. It was invaluable in building up intelligence reports as to enemy movements which could not otherwise have been known.

For several days de Bruijn stayed in the hut of Metakipame at Waniboega. All the huts for Papuans and Europeans alike were built to the same size and design and were well camouflaged. Thus when, on the 15th October and the two following days, a Japanese reconnaissance plane flew over Waniboega, its observers saw nothing to indicate the presence of de Bruijn and his men.

It was at this time that Joseph, the *Bestuursassistent*, and Toemaho, the carpenter, made their notable exploratory trip through the unknown country in which the Delo canyon is situated and reached *Explorateur's Bivak*, which seventeen years before had been the most westerly point of the Stirling expedition led by le Roux. Seeing the frail-looking little

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Joseph, who even now is only about twenty-four years of age, it is very difficult to realize how, as leader of the small party, he crossed that terrible unknown region and bridged the gap that had been a mystery to white man and held its secrets since time began. Joseph, however, thought nothing of it. He would not have done it for any other man. It was the *Kontolulle's* wish. The *Kontolulle* had welcomed him back when he ran away from the Japanese. Even though the *Kontolulle* was his senior officer, he was also his friend. There was a comradeship between them, the comradeship, faith, and equality that Chief Commissioner van der Plas had written of in his letter when de Bruijn made the decision to remain in the central mountains. Joseph was well aware that the *Kontolulle* would ask nothing of his men that he would not do himself.

*Supplies arrive at Oeitapa and Sinigipa—Papuan see rabbits for the first time—Nurwe does some recruiting—An adulterer meets his end—New Year, 1944—Rifle practice—Dominggoes entertains—Another “drop”—“Crayfish” party arrives—Gout’s illness.*

“WE HAVE everything we want. It is just like a Christmas party.”

It was the 29th October, 1943, and a Dutch Catalina plane had been over at six o'clock that morning. Four times it had flown over Bilorai, dropping parachutes and dumps, and then it went over Oeitapa, on the far side of Sinigipa, and dropped more supplies. There was a good clearing at Oeitapa, where Joseph was temporarily in charge. Radio Operator Gout took over from Joseph two weeks later. In all there had been eleven parachutes and fourteen dumps. Two of the “drops” at Bilorai, and one at Oeitapa, had contained wheat. The total quantity of the “drop” was 10,000 pounds. The men shouted with joy as they opened and sorted the bundles. Any one might prove to be a surprise packet. Headquarters had excelled themselves. There was plenty of rice, and well packed this time, and a splendid assortment of food supplies. Also there were real potatoes, and clothing, rifles, ammunition, shoes, mouth-organs, cigarettes, cowrie shells, axes, jungle knives, beads, mirrors, and Shelltox for the fleas! There were white leghorn chickens (although, as we discovered later, white leghorns do not make good mothers), and even rabbits. And for Christmas a quantity

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of Bols, brandy, and rum. There was everything for a good party.

Already the people were gathering around, laughing and chattering with excitement, for these white people often had something new to show them. Sometimes they had presents. Here, certainly, they had something they had never seen before. What were those strange animals? Rabbits? What funny-looking things! They called to each other and came again and again, fascinated, and they sat about on their haunches exclaiming: "*Toeani, Toeani, Gapa ibo*" (Sir, sir, long ears").

Then they tried to classify the rabbit, and decided that it belonged to the *koes koes* family, which was the nearest thing they knew. But the *koes koes* is a long-tailed, rather bear-like creature. It has nocturnal habits and lives on jungle leaves, and eats their fruits—but *Gapa ibo, Gapa ibo*. Never had they seen any animals with such long ears.

As a result of all these supplies, the bodyguard, now about forty strong, was able to have rice twice a week. Also, each member now had a rifle. For the first time in the history of the Netherlands East Indies Government the people were armed, and they were very proud of the fact. "Oaktree" was now a fighting force. "It is better to have a gun than a wife," they said.

These men, later, were evacuated to Australia and then returned to Hollandia, where they did magnificent work in the Papuan battalion under the command of Captain van Eechoud.

With this "drop" they got new radio sets. Gout took them to Oeitapa and operated them from there, and de Bruijn worked the old ones from Bilorai. Thus they were able to maintain continuous communication between Oeitapa and Bilorai and from both places with Australia.

The vegetables in the gardens, grown from seeds sent from Australia, grew luxuriantly. The three posts now had

flourishing gardens. But all this increased gardening required a lot of people to look after it, and they were not always available. Nurwe, the former houseboy, hit upon a new idea for recruiting. He took a piece of paper and a pencil and drew the head of a man.

"Now," he said, "take that to the village and tell the chief to send men for the gardens." He tried this on the chiefs of several villages with miraculous effect. Any drawing or likeness of the human being is apparently taboo amongst all the mountain Papuans, and a chief, when this paper was brought to him, became very afraid. If he did not send men, as requested, he thought, some dreadful and evil thing would come upon his village. Consequently there were plenty of men forthcoming. This method of recruiting worked very successfully for a number of weeks, until the chiefs, either sensing a trick, or cannily realizing that no evil spirits were hovering about on its account, became less afraid, and supplies of labour again eased off.

Like the Mohammedans, no human figure appears in the art of these central mountain people. In fact, they know very little art. The only carving they make is sometimes to be seen on an arrow head, and this is of a formal leaf design. Occasionally there is the suggestion of something like a cowrie shell. However, they excel in making bags, in which they carry their personal possessions, or food and articles for trading. The bags are beautifully woven and artistically coloured in red and yellow. The red dye is obtained from a kind of moss and the yellow from the stalk of an orchid. Practically the only other form of art they practise is the *kabazai*, a coat of mail worn by the men. This is skilfully made of lengths of rattan linked together like a coat of mail chain. It completely encircles the body and hangs by shoulder-straps like a singlet. Often the top edge is trimmed with skins of gaily-coloured birds. Some of the *kabazais* are really beautiful.



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With the last plane had come a letter from N.E.F.I.S., saying that Captain van Eechoud was going to land at Baliem, and from there would try to make contact with the "Oaktree" party by an overland route. Before he attempted this, however, a plane would be flown over with the object of making photostrips of the whole country. Shortly after this message was received a special air mission was sent out in a Dutch Mitchell (B25) plane. Van Eechoud accompanied the party, and, as the plane came over Bilorai, he dropped a letter to de Bruijn. It reported that they were making the photostrips, and, much to de Bruijn's satisfaction, confirmed his own finding that the Baliem River had its source far over to the west, close by Vonk Lake, by the De Burcht Range.

As the B25 flew over Bilorai, the "Oaktree" party and people of the village gathered around the Netherlands flag, which had been laid out as a signal. At first the Migani were afraid. They did not know what plane it was, and kept asking: "Is it a war plane, or is it a Migani plane?" Meaning, is it an enemy plane or one of ours?—showing by the question their acceptance of the Sitoegoemina story of all being of one clan.

At about this time Domingoes, who was known as the clown of the party, came in with an account of the bombing raid over Enarotali. The object of the raid was to bomb the village of Mejepa, which was known to be a Japanese bivouac, and where the people were pro-Japanese. But by mistake the nearby and larger village of Wagete was bombed. The people of Mejepa laughed. "That is what happens to the friends of the *Kontolulle*," they said. Wagete was the village from which Domingoes came, but even this fact could not quell his clowning. With perfect mimicry he described the astonishment and fear of the people, the noise of the explosions and the rattle of machine-guns. A bomb fell directly upon a hut. "The hut was there. Then—boom, bang—there was nothing but air."

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On the 25th November, 1943, at Bilorai, de Bruijn celebrated the anniversary of his birthday. He was now thirty years of age, and already had spent nearly five years as District Officer in the central mountains of Netherlands New Guinea. Unfortunately the party was divided between the three posts at Waniboega, Bilorai, and Oeitapa, so the occasion was not as joyous as it might have been.

Two days later a Japanese reconnaissance plane came over and the party had to go into hiding. As some sort of consolation, a message was received on the same day saying that Enarotali had again been bombed. Word was also received informing de Bruijn that the plan to send van Eechoud overland from Baliem had been abandoned. This was a great relief to de Bruijn. He had not favoured the idea at all. He knew too much of that inhospitable country to feel that the scheme was worth the effort. Instead, Headquarters advised him, another party would be dropped in February, near his present post at Bilorai, and after training with him for a few weeks would work towards the north coast to Geelvink Bay. This new party was to be known as the "Crayfish" project. It was de Bruijn's job to find a suitable landing site and to prepare a strip 600 feet square for the purpose. It was no easy task in that district. Eventually they found a suitable place, close by the Waboe River, and put in a month's hard work cutting the high cane grass and clearing the deep roots.

Early one morning de Bruijn was awakened by one of the Miganis who came to tell him that a man in the village had committed adultery. The people of the other villages were trying to kill the adulterer, but so far had only succeeded in wounding him in the side.

For a primitive people, such as these are, the code of morals is very high. In the case of adultery the death penalty is usually enforced, and the people of the entire village, or villages, will join in the hunt for the guilty one, until he is

hounded down and killed. In this instance de Bruijn intervened.

"So long as that man is at Bilorai," he said, "you must not kill him. I will not allow it. You must not kill him. If you do I shall be very angry, and the ghost will stay here in the village and make you all sick, and then you will die."

"All right," they agreed, "we will do nothing." But all the time people from the other villages were gathering together and shouting:

"Kill him. Kill him. Kill him."

Meanwhile the culprit had taken refuge in the hut of Korobia, the Chief of Bilorai, and Korobia, according to the law of his tribe, thus became the wounded man's host. Even on such occasions, when the man is guilty of adultery, the greatest of all their crimes, the host is bound to defend his guest.

Korobia stood before his hut, firmly grasping his bow and arrows, and facing the yelling, angry horde. Occasionally he shot an arrow into the air, but not directly at the people, and this by-play went on for some time. It was nothing more than pantomime.

The pursuers grew braver and came closer to the hut, trying to shoot their arrows through the small opening that served as a window. Here the man inside had the advantage. As they came closer to get their aim he was able to shoot at them from the shadows of the interior, and quite a few went away with arrows stuck in their bodies or legs, and so no one dared to go within more than about thirty yards of the hut. During the afternoon an attempt was made to set fire to the building, but de Bruijn himself opportunely appeared on the scene. He extinguished the fire and knocked out the man who had started it.

All this time the people were prancing about and shouting to the adulterer, inviting him to come out and be killed. He was loath to accept the invitation, and the chief, Korobia, stood fast outside the door.



“ Fascinated, they sat about on their haunches, exclaiming: ‘ Gapa ibo ’—long ears ” (see p. 204).



ADULTERY (1).

“ He had gone about thirty yards when he was shot in the back with an arrow ” (see p. 209).



ADULTERY (2).

“He fell unconscious and the people carried him away.”



ADULTERY (3).

“They tied him to a stick and carried him to the river bank.”

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De Bruijn went into the hut and bathed the man's wound, which had been cut open to let the blood flow freely and cleanse it. He said to him:

"When you feel stronger it would be better if you try to escape." But the man didn't want to go. He felt safe while de Bruijn was there to keep the people back, and while Korobia stood guard. The latter, it appeared, was wearying of this enforced position as host. Every now and then he would leave his stand by the hut and join the people, sitting down amongst them and talking with them. Then he would say to de Bruijn:

"The man has been here long enough. Will you give me permission to kill him?"

On receiving de Bruijn's refusal, Korobia once more returned to take up his defensive position in front of the hut.

But the poor wretch stayed there all night. Next morning the people, led by one of the men, came to the *Kontolulle* and offered to give him a pig if he would give them permission to kill the adulterer, and he answered them:

"No. I will not give you permission, and I have already warned you that if you kill the man his ghost will come to this village."

Yet, the next day they came back again, and this time their leader offered two pigs.

Later in the day, while de Bruijn was working in the radio hut, there was a great commotion amongst the people. One of them had successfully set fire to Korobia's hut. The adulterer had no option but to run, and after he had gone about thirty yards he was shot in the back with an arrow and another lodged in his neck. Even so he was not killed, but fell unconscious. Then the people tied him to a stick and carried him to the river-bank 1,500 feet below the village. A procession of yelling and excited people followed.

At the river's edge they put the man down and questioned him.

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"Did you commit adultery?" There was no answer, so they threw water on him to revive him. Again they asked, "Did you commit adultery?" Partially revived by the cold water, but too weak to answer coherently, the man mumbled something, which was eagerly interpreted as an admission of guilt. A few more arrows were shot into him, and then midst great shouting they threw the body into the water. Immediately one of the onlookers began to cry bitterly. De Bruijn went over to him.

"Why are you crying?" he asked.

"He is my brother. They have killed my brother." Yet this wailing creature was the same man who on the previous day had come to de Bruijn offering a pig, and then two pigs, if he would give permission for the adulterer to be killed. Tribal law is stronger than the family tie.

When the adulterer had been shot and captured and de Bruijn could do nothing to intervene, he took the opportunity of taking an extraordinary set of photographs of the scene. Like many of his pictures they are unique. No other white man is known to have witnessed such an event, and no other photographs are known to exist.

Next morning de Bruijn was in his own hut when it accidentally caught fire. Sparks from the open hearth ignited the thatched roof, and in a moment dried bark, grass, and pandanus leaves were ablaze. Calling loudly for help, he rushed in and out trying to save his possessions and equipment. All the other members of the party happened to be some distance away, most of them working in the gardens, and they did not know what had happened. He managed to save a few of his notes, his knapsack, radio, tommy-gun, and about 5,000 rounds of ammunition, and also his camp-bed. By this time, the bodyguard having heard his calls and seeing the smoke, decided among themselves that the Japanese had arrived. Instead of rushing straight to de Bruijn's assistance, they divided their forces and crept quietly

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upon the spot from all directions, as they thought, to ambush the enemy. Then they pounced, but it was too late.

Perhaps the most inconvenient loss was the main supply of cowrie shells. Compensation had to be made, and all the people were called together.

"Now," said de Bruijn, "I warned you not to kill that man, and you have disobeyed my orders. I told you that if you killed him his ghost would come to this village. It is his ghost that has caused my hut to be burned down."

The people were very repentant, and offered payment as punishment for their disobedience. They paid up handsomely, and brought the *Kontolulle* six pigs. Having had their kill they were satisfied.

At that time a new item appeared on the menu. It was one of those rare periods in the central mountains when there had been no rain for about ten days. Mostly it rains at some time practically every day. On the higher altitudes a stretch of ten rainless days is regarded as the "dry season." During these dry periods the rivers recede very quickly. It is then that the people, defying the ghosts, go out at night to the river, taking with them torches made of bundles of rushes, and strange dark figures are seen swooping and bending along the muddy banks. They are catching frogs. Only certain clans, and very few of the *Ekaris*, eat frogs, but the *Miganis* regard them as a great delicacy. They brought their catch from the river-banks and fried it in butter, which had come in the recent "drops." De Bruijn joined in the feast and found it good.

"25th December, 1943. Christmas Day.—Had Christmas dinner with Nurwe and Johannis Latumakulita. Sang Christmas carols. Both the boys have good voices, and like most of the Amboinese are Christians. All the others are away at the Posts. There was nothing to drink; all our liquor had been lost in the fire when my hut was burned. Joseph is out on trip exploring another stretch of unknown



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country between Walapa, the upper reaches of the Rouffaer River, and down south-east to Ebe."

When he set out on the journey Joseph had taken a Migani word list with him, and during his travels had made a word list of the language of the Dem people, through whose territory he passed. He reported having seen a lot of breadfruit trees, which are not found in other regions of the central mountains. As he descended to about 900-1,000 feet above sea-level, they began to appear. It was only in this region of the Dems that he saw them. He told of other things peculiar to this country. The Dem people, he said, eat snakes, which other people do not. The idea disgusts the Miganis, and they consider the custom to be "low." But the Dems hang the snakes' jaws in their houses. There are also a lot of jungle fowl, particularly a species which lays a big egg that is good for eating.

New Year's Eve came. It had been a typical day in the mountains: a glorious sunny morning, rain in the afternoon, and a big thunderstorm at night. The storm passed away, and at midnight ten members of "Oaktree" assembled and heralded the New Year with a round of tommy-gun fire.

"There was a hell of a noise. The night was still after the storm and the echoes of our fire rattled round and round the mountains. We wished each other good luck, and all wondered what 1944 would have in store for us."

Eight days later Boejani, Secret Agent No. 1, came in again. He had been away in the east since October, trading pigs and salt. He stayed for a month at Bilorai for rifle practice, and soon became a very good shot. When the month expired he was given a rifle and sent back to his village. He took with him another rifle, to be handed to Weakebo, and Boejani was to instruct the chief how to use it. As the boy was going into the Ekari region as a spy, he

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had to be very careful while carrying two guns. He overcame the difficulty by skilfully camouflaging them by wrapping them in banana leaves, just as he would have done with a bundle of arrows or a pig. When he came to Weakebo he was instructed to tell him to send a few men from his village to Bilorai for rifle training, when they too, after a few weeks, would be sent back fully armed. Their object then would be to hinder the Japanese on the trail from Orawja to Tigi Lakes, to keep the bridges cut, and make raids on the enemy's bivouacs. All this time the Japanese had felt safe on the trail to the coast, but by these diversionary attacks, which Weakebo was told for his own safety must not take place too near his village, they would be hindered and would not know by whom the attack was made. The main object of these raids was to distract Japanese attention from the "Oak-tree" area.

Much planning had to be done in preparation for a possible evacuation route by way of the upper Rouffaer River, for it was obvious from reports received, and after the Japanese reconnaissance planes had been over, that the "Oak-tree" party would be pushed more and more into the interior. The region to which they would have to go was little known. With this in view Radio Operator Gout made a trip from Oeitapa along the upper Rouffaer, down the south-eastern reaches of the river and back.

Early in the New Year of 1944, Dominggoes, the clown, was installed as a member of the bodyguard. He had been with Weakebo for some time, and had made several attempts to get through to the *Kontolulle* at Bilorai, but the feeling of the Migani people against the Ekaris, who, they said, were all spies, had until now prevented Dominggoes from passing through their territory. With him came two sons of Weakebo, and three other men from the same village. They had come for rifle training, in response to the message de Bruijn had sent through Boejani.

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Here Weakebo gave further evidence of his thoughtfulness and generosity. It occurred to him that the *Kontolulle* might be short of cowrie shells. Weakebo himself did not have many, but he gathered all he could spare, and more, and sent them to de Bruijn for his use in case of need. De Bruijn was very touched. "Good Weakebo," he said. "'There is no one like 'im.' "

The spirits of the "Oaktree" party were much enlivened by the advent of Domingoes. His clowning and mimicry and the humorous way in which he told his stories made him the most popular member of the party. At nights the air rang with laughter as the men gathered round the fire while Domingoes held forth. One of his recent adventures with the Japanese followed their entry into his village. They wounded one of his goats. That was a serious matter, for this animal was one of the offspring of two goats presented to him by the *Kontolulle* while at Enarotali. Domingoes was very annoyed with the Japanese, and decided to await an opportunity for revenge. Day by day he watched them. Then, in due course, he saw them leave the village—unattended—and go down the trail for supplies. This was his chance. In the darkness of the night he crept forth. No one knew of his going. Now this was a brave thing for Domingoes to do, because it was very unusual for any of the people to be out alone at night. It showed that his desire for revenge was far stronger than his fear of prowling nocturnal ghosts. As he entered the village his movements were swift and quiet. Almost in a moment there was a great blaze. Domingoes had fired the huts. His people were awakened by the glare, and they were much impressed. Already Domingoes was back amongst them, an interested spectator. His companions had no knowledge that this was his doing, but he was more pleased than they, for he alone knew that the burning huts were those which contained the enemy's supplies. All the credit was given to the *Kontolulle*, for Domingoes said

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nothing, and the story spread—no doubt by now it has become a legend—that the fire was caused by the *Kontolulle's* carrier pigeons, who flew at night with fire in their beaks.

But Domingoes had yet to pass through Enarotali and the enemy-occupied territory. He set forth blandly and cheerfully. When he met one of the Japanese he went up to him and shook hands, calling him "Father." By this guile he found them friendly and so gained a safe passage.

One of his favourite stories was of the burial mounds of the placenta. It was the custom of the women, after childbirth, to bury the umbilical cord and its appurtenances under a mound of earth, and it is quite usual to see a number of these heaps, like small anthills, about the villages. When the Japanese entered a village and saw the freshly made dumps, they immediately thought of buried supplies. They stood about in groups while their men dug and searched. The village people, eager to see what these strange men would do next, joined the groups, laughing amongst themselves at the incomprehensible ways of these people. The Japanese were much annoyed. Domingoes told his story with all the mimicry and antics at his command, and conjured up such a humorous scene that he was often asked to repeat the performance.

The month of February saw Radio Operator Gout stricken down and in great pain. He was probably suffering from stomach ulcers, and as the attacks became more frequent and more acute, it was suggested to Headquarters that he should be evacuated. There had been no doctor with the party since May of the previous year, and his treatment was beyond their limited experience and medical aid.

De Bruijn himself very nearly passed beyond all aid when another plane came over and dropped 10,000 pounds of supplies. While he was working on the clearing, one dump of rice fell six feet from him, and on the other side a dump of axes. Later, when they were checking the stores, one axe

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was missing. Subsequently it was found buried two-and-a-half feet in the ground within three feet of where de Bruijn had been standing.

This plane also brought a welcome consignment of goats. They were dropped in cases by parachutes, and made a safe landing, though for some time the goats appeared to be dazed by the experience.

When Gout was sufficiently recovered, he came from Oeitapa to Bilorai to assist in the preparations for the N.E.F.I.S. party which was expected to arrive within the next week. Everything had to be ready for their landing. On the 26th February, 1944, the new party known as "Crayfish" arrived. It consisted of the leader, Lieut. Overweel, a radio operator Brink, and two Indonesians. They flew over in an American Liberator and were dropped by parachute. Owing to bad weather, instead of flying over at the usual 600 feet, the plane came in at 5,000 feet high. The "drop" was therefore not as accurate as it might have been, with the consequence that on landing four men were scattered far and wide. It took some time to get the party assembled. Two of them nearly landed in the river, and were found on the far bank. Another fell a mile away, and Brink, the radio operator, came to rest in the top of a tall tree.

He was found there by a small Migani boy of about five years of age. The delighted child had this discovery all to himself. He stood by the trunk of the tree calling out:

"*Amakane, Toeani*" ("Welcome, Tuan"). "*Amakane, Toeani. Amakane, Toeani.*"

Meanwhile Brink, entangled in the branches thirty-five feet above, was nearly choked by his parachute harness. Every struggle he made caused his body to swing like a pendulum and drew the cords tighter about his chest. To every *Amakane* he cursed the whole world and called out in Malayan:

"Free me. Free me," but the child knew no Malayan and

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Brink no Migani. At last by some good fortune Brink managed to free himself and climbed down. His miniature attendant led him to where the party was busy gathering in the supplies and stragglers.

This parachute landing of the "Crayfish" party was historic. It was the first occasion on which operational jumps had been made in the central mountains.

De Bruijn's sense of humour got the better of him, and he wirelessly to Australia:

"Four men landed O.K. Send cement for memorial stone to mark landing."

His message quite upset the dignity of Headquarters, where it was received with considerable hilarity.

One dump of supplies, containing clothes, had fallen far away and could not be located.

"Now I will show you what a good dog Dodi is," said de Bruijn. "Come along, Dodi. We will find the dump." Together master and dog set forth. After stumbling and pushing through the grass, Dodi disappeared. He had pursued the hunt in his own way. Presently his bark was heard, and de Bruijn made his way towards it. Eventually he found Dodi. The dog was sitting by the dump looking very pleased with himself.

De Bruijn, at this time, had grown a beard. He admits that it was not a great success. In length it was all right, but it was very sparse. When Overweel saw it he was very amused.

"Its length is fine," he said. "Why, you look like a young van der Plas." The then Chief Commissioner's beard was long and square and worn with a dignity fitting to its owner. De Bruijn's young and struggling effort could not hope to compete, and, thanks to Overweel's comment, was short-lived.

For security reasons the members of the parties now took

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new names. "Oaktree" members adopted those from Karl May's American-Indian stories which had been one of the joys of de Bruijn's youth. He became Winnetou, Gout Old Shatterhand, Berger Old Firehand, and so on. Overweel, as leader of the "Crayfish" party, was called Tarzan.

On the 9th March a message was received from Headquarters saying that Gout, who was again ill, would be evacuated from Hagers Lake, far to the north of their present camp. De Bruijn was asked to accompany him for a conference with a N.E.F.I.S. officer who would go in the plane. He was quite willing to do this, but he suspected that the officer might want him to go to Australia too. He was not going to be caught up in such a scheme.

"I will go to Hagers Lake," he wired, "if you will assure me that you will not want me to go to Australia too, and after the conference will allow me to return to the mountains. While I am away I will leave the party in the charge of Overweel." The Government agreed.

No one outside the party, least of all the Government, realized the difficulties of this proposed journey to Hagers Lake. It meant, first of all, passing over the Delo Canyon—the country explored by Joseph in October 1943, and then working down the Rouffaer River, coming from the high mountain ranges down to the lower hot malarial regions.

The plan to evacuate Gout was known by N.E.F.I.S. as the "Riverstone" project. It was necessary that a main base camp for that scheme should be established, and that meant sending forward supplies from Oeitapa. The place decided upon was the little village of Oegaloeck, situated beyond the Delo Canyon, at 900 feet above sea-level, and on the eastern side of the upper Rouffaer River.

*De Bruijn leaves for Olegaloek—Cutting through the jungle  
—Sitting on a snake—The decision to evacuate.*

DE BRUIJN, Gout, Overweel, and Brink had come to the village of Oeitapa. It was Overweel's first trip in the mountains, and he was very pleased at all he saw. In fact, Oeitapa pleased them all. It is one of the best-known villages in the land of the Ndani people, situated in a pleasant wood at an altitude of 3,300 feet. It was not so cold as the regions they had left; moreover, there were nice huts in which to live, and close by was a good cascade which made bathing both pleasant and safe. There was more bird-life, and white cockatoos and birds of paradise abounded.

After a few days' rest Gout went forward to Olegaloek, taking the portable radios with him. His object was to supervise the building of two canoes for work on the Upper Rouffaer River. The canoes, each about 15-20 feet long, were made by the soldiers and cut from nearby trees. Normally, their construction takes about five days, but it is not always easy to find suitable trees, particularly in the lower regions. Gout had bad luck. The canoes were made in good time, but when the first one was launched the ropes broke, and it was swamped and promptly sank. The second one was launched all right, but the current was so strong that it was carried away down the stream. Then it too was swamped, and a lot of supplies were lost.

Gout reported his loss, and suggested the use of rafts, but de Bruijn forbade this as being too dangerous on the swiftly flowing river. The delay was serious. They were to have been



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at Hagers Lake by the 10th April, ready for the evacuation, and word had to be sent to Headquarters that this was now impossible.

It was already the 9th April, Easter Sunday, before de Bruijn left for Olegaloek, leaving Overweel in charge at Oeitapa. The country between these two villages is sparsely populated and very rough. It took de Bruijn three days to make the journey. There were steep hills to climb, and then an equally steep downhill way. All the time there was nothing but jungle, jungle, jungle.

The first bivouac was made under an overhanging cliff on the mountain-side. At least it gave some protection from the tropical downpour. Still tramping in heavy rain, they came to *Explorateur's Bivak*. Even after eighteen years, since le Roux had been there with the Stirling expedition, signs of a clearing still remained. Softwood trees had sprung up, and their growth, towering above the much-slower-growing hardwood trees, showed where the timber had been cut. Otherwise it was just as Joseph, the *Bestuursassistent*, and Tumahu had reported. De Bruijn camped there one night, wet and miserable. Torrential rain had fallen all that day and showed no sign of abating. The place was deserted. Formerly some of the Dem people had lived there, but they had moved across to a site by the Nogolo River because of ghosts supposedly haunting the old village.

Next morning de Bruijn crossed the river by means of a rattan bridge. Beneath him flood waters swirled and roared, carrying on their way great trees and boulders tossed about on the current.

On the day before he reached Olegaloek a plane had come over and dropped supplies. Gout, with two police boys and five of the bodyguard, received them. Much to their joy there were some loaves of bread. Never had any bread or substitute for it been sent, and here was fresh bread! In their exuberance they wirelessed:

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"English bread is bloody good."

Evidently their appreciation was recorded, for bread and flour were included in all future supplies.

Olegaloek is in the land of the Dem people. Important as it was to de Bruijn and his party, it was of small account to the Dems. The village is so small that it consisted of only three men and five wives, and most of them were insane through inter-marriage.

When de Bruijn arrived there, one of the first things he did was to inspect the river. He saw that it would be impossible to navigate any sort of native craft on its swiftly flowing current. The Rouffaer, at this point, is about 100 feet wide, though farther north, in the Murolakte region, it widens in places to a distance of about 900 feet. At Olegaloek the water was grey and dirty because of its passage through the limestone plateau near the Upper Nogolo. Only its tributaries were clear and fresh. The main river was so dirty that it was even impossible to wash vegetables in it. There were rapids north of Olegaloek, but Gout did not know of these, though it was obvious even to anyone who did not know the river that there must be rapids between the 900 feet altitude of Olegaloek and the drop to 300 feet at Hagers. It would mean a journey to the lower regions of the Rouffaer before canoes could be used on the quieter waters. So they moved on, down through the unpopulated territory of the Dems. No one liked it very much. The country was unknown and its emptiness was eerie.

Gout had accompanied de Bruijn to Olegaloek, but he was now a very sick man. De Bruijn decided to send him back to Oeitapa to rest there until word came that the canoes were ready.

The night before de Bruijn left Olegaloek he heard much yelling and screaming. It was about 1 a.m. The noise of something in agony and the excited shouting of the people

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rent the still night. He went out to investigate, and saw the boys prancing about and shooting their arrows at something. They had been aroused by a squealing pig, and found it being strangled by a python. The boys shot arrow after arrow into the snake, and then crushed its head with logs of wood. The incident did not make de Bruijn very happy. A snake is perhaps the only thing of which he is terrified, and of it his horror knows no bounds. Unfortunately for him they were now only about 800 feet above sea-level, and at this altitude pythons were frequently seen.

To the north of Olegaloek de Bruijn and his men struggled on to Falong, on the east side of the river. It was still deserted country and there were no trails. Everywhere was heavy jungle: there was not one open spot, and all the way their path had to be hacked through the tropical growth.

Later on, in this mass of jungle, they had the terrific task of cutting clearings for three drops of supplies. When the time came for this job, the boys helped considerably by adopting a method of their own. The great trees were so thick that the axe-men would start early in the morning, cutting along a row. Each trunk was hacked half-way through. Then in the afternoon they returned to the first tree of the line and cut it right through. As the great tree fell, its mass of foliage and tangled vines dragged the other weakened ones with it. The awe-inspiring stillness of the jungle was suddenly rent with the noise of crashing trunks, the shrieking of torn branches, and the sharp report of snapping vines.

From a village two days south-east of Olegaloek, de Bruijn had been fortunate in obtaining eighteen carriers. These, with two of his police boys and three members of the body-guard, now made up his party. They had a portable radio with them, and by this means were able to keep in touch with Gout at Oeitapa. It was this small band of men who had had to cut the trail, and by the end of each day they were

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all so tired that their bones and bodies ached. The only thing that revived them was a refreshing swim in the beautiful clear waters of the tributaries of the Upper Rouffaer. For the time being—but not for long—they were all right for fresh food. The Dem carriers had brought their dogs with them and, with Dodi well in the chase, they hunted wallabies all day long.

On the 1st May they made bivouac at a site which they called Hollandia Camp. The name was chosen because while they were there news came through that the Americans had occupied Hollandia, on the north coast. They were very excited by the news, for this was the first place in the East Indies to be reoccupied. The police boys, in particular, were delighted, and danced in spite of their tiredness.

Now they had to cut some clearings for "drops," for a request had been made for supplies to meet them there. It was eight days later before the plane came over, and by then it was too late. All the Dem carriers had been sent back for want of food. De Bruijn was left with his two police boys and a bodyguard of three.

A few days later, de Bruijn had his evening meal with his men in their hut. It had been another frightful day of teeming rain. Almost everything was under water. Frogs, insects, and, it seemed, every living creature, had jumped, crawled, or flown into the huts for shelter. At about seven o'clock he went to the radio hut for the usual evening messages, and sat down before the machine on a bench made of slats cut from the nearby growth. As he was working he felt something flick against his arm. He made a movement to brush it away, and went on working. Still the thing kept flicking him, and turning his head he saw the tail of a snake. Its head was caught between two of the slats on which he was sitting. He was almost sick with horror, yet he dare not move. A terrified shriek for help brought the police boys running over, and they hacked off the head while de Bruijn

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still sat there. That horrible experience made them all very nervous about sleeping on the ground.

*"8th May, 1944.—Very hungry. Only one meal a day now. There is not much to eat in this land, and we are living mostly on the soft white tops of young palms. . . ."*

This extract from de Bruijn's diary shows to what circumstances they were now reduced. Edible jungle fruits were scarce. There were no more wallabies to be seen. There was not even a dish of mice to appease their hunger. Wistfully they thought of the delicious omelets the Dems made in the higher regions where the jungle hen was to be found. De Bruijn had watched them, many a time, break the eggs into a banana leaf and hold it over the fire until it was cooked. He never wanted a better omelet, but alas! even the jungle hen was left behind.

At last a Catalina came over and brought welcome supplies. Once more they could sit down to a good meal. But their peace was soon broken by disquieting news from Overweel, at Bilorai, to say that the Japanese were approaching along the trail.

In accordance with a prearranged plan, Overweel had gone down to Waniboega and burned all the huts previously occupied by the party. Metakipame and his people still remained in their little village, but all signs of "Oaktree's" occupation were removed. Overweel then took up a position above the Kande Pass by Waniboega, intending to try to hinder the Japanese by sniping and surprise them on a supposedly safe road. If he could not hold the pass his next retreat would be to Bilorai.

And on that same day—it was not a happy one—de Bruijn received another message, from Headquarters, which was even more disturbing. It informed him that because of the "tactical and political" situation, the members at Olega-loek and Oeitapa were to move with the bodyguard to Hagers Lake, and those at Bilorai and Waniboega were to

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form a party with "Crayfish" and go to Nabire, on the north coast. This action was taken by Headquarters because it was considered that as the American forces were occupying more and more bases on the north coast and, perforce, the Japanese were retiring, the importance of the interior and intelligence relating to the central mountains was waning.

This startling point of view, which caused much amazement and consternation among the little company of men who had worked together for so long, showed, as previous experience had done, how little Headquarters really knew about the interior. All along de Bruijn had kept them fully informed. Indeed, the information and intelligence reports sent by him comprised the only knowledge that Headquarters had of the central mountains. Even now they did not seem to realize that it was quite impossible for a party to go to Nabire. The Japanese, knowing that they could not hope to hold their positions against the American invasion, were forced to withdraw. Headquarters should have realized that the mountain party would soon have come face to face with a retiring and overwhelming enemy force! Perhaps, until it was put to them, Headquarters did not consider that de Bruijn had with him thirty Papuans who had left their homes at Wissel Lakes and had served him loyally for three years. They would have to be evacuated too. If they had attempted to return to their homes, or to the districts where their homes had once stood, they would almost certainly have been killed. Whatever the Government might say, de Bruijn would not think for one moment of turning them loose. They had given him firstly their trust, their friendship, then their companionship, and had worked for him and with him. He had asked little, but no man could have asked and received more than they gave. The proposal was beyond all reason. At his urgent request Headquarters cancelled the order. Then a fresh one was issued. The entire party was to be evacuated from Hagers Lake.

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While this controversy was going on de Bruijn sent a message to Overweel not to retire beyond Bilorai. But N.E.F.I.S. appears to have taken the command from the man on the spot, and sent a message to Overweel to retire to Oeitapa. Confusion reigned. Messages hummed to and fro. From de Bruijn:

"This is ridiculous. If we retire beyond Bilorai, the Japanese will soon know our whole evacuation trail."

He suggested, instead, that the 1941 trail to the east, towards Beura and Ielop, should be followed, and that the party should then turn north. N.E.F.I.S., it may be granted, had more knowledge than de Bruijn of the war situation about the islands, but unquestionably they knew little of the interior. However, N.E.F.I.S. remained adamant. Their reply amused de Bruijn:

"This is a permanent order, and you are instructed to arrange the evacuation";

and naively added:

"But take precautions not to let the Japanese know," which was precisely what de Bruijn had been trying to convince them was the point of his whole argument. Then the message concluded:

"This is also an order from Mr. van der Plas."

N.E.F.I.S., it would appear, at least knew the man with whom they were dealing. They would not agree that de Bruijn was right, nor could they themselves suffer defeat. Knowingly or otherwise, they brought in the one man to whom de Bruijn would always listen; one whose wisdom and kindly understanding, whose interest and alertness of mind had won the affection and admiration of the younger. Perhaps beneath it all they found in each other a common bond

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of idealism. Whatever it may be, van der Plas is the one man to whom de Bruijn, as I have known him, would bow his head.

"This is an order from Mr. van der Plas." He repeated the words aloud—and bowed his head.



*Schoutenkamp—"Oaktree's" birthday—Bronze Cross awarded—Overweel abandons Oeitapa—Canoe Bivak—"Oaktree" and "Crayfish" parties come together.*

PLANS FOR the evacuation of both parties were put in hand. Naturally, de Bruijn would take such precautions as he could. Advice on that score was not necessary; on the face of it, it was absurd. The Japanese were sufficiently well informed to know that the retirement of the party to Oeitapa could only mean that they were going to Hagers Lake. It was the only possible place for evacuation. There was no other way out that they could have attempted and survived.

It was better, however, that the two parties should come together, because Overweel was beginning to experience difficulties. Two of his bodyguard ran away, fortunately leaving their rifles. It was not Overweel's fault. He was doing a good job, but he was new to the country and to the ways of its people. It was the old story again. The men would willingly stay with de Bruijn, but would not work for anyone else.

In the meantime de Bruijn had moved a stage farther down the Rouffaer. On the 24th May he made bivouac at Schoutenkamp. The American forces had that day invaded Biak, in the Schouten Group of islands to the north of Japen, above Geelvink Bay.

It was still impossible to use canoes on the river. In any event, there were only two men of the party who could use paddles. When Stirling and le Roux had come through this region in 1926, travelling in the opposite direction, they had not had to face the difficulties of a jungle trail as de Bruijn

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had done. They had brought with them Dyaks from Borneo, men who were accustomed to big rivers and skilled in handling their crafts. De Bruijn with his few boys, in going north, had no option but to walk hour after hour, day after day, cutting their way, every yard of it, through a tangle of tropical growth that clung to them, tore their clothes and limbs, and barred their footsteps. If they were close by the river, there were rocky banks, steep and high. Their shoes were slippery. Sometimes they even envied the sure-footed Papuans with their bare feet. This party was the first to cut this trail. Often they lost time, when they came to an impassable rock, and had to turn back to cut a fresh trail to circumvent it. Even though van Eechoud had taken air photographs of this region, they were of little value, except in a general way. They could not show the difficulties the man on foot would have to encounter. They found too a new horror in the leeches, which they had never experienced in the higher regions. The loathsome things clung to them and wormed their way into the sweating bodies. Whenever it was possible, de Bruijn worked towards the river, hoping each time to find that they might be able to use canoes. Still the rapids roared, and the current flowed too swiftly to permit the launching of any native craft.

The day on which they established Schouten Bivak was memorable in many ways. It was the anniversary of the founding of "Oaktree." That in itself was cause for celebration. "Oaktree" was one year old. It would never see another anniversary. To mark the occasion a plane came over and dropped supplies and messages of congratulation. It was comforting and cheering to know that, in spite of any differences of opinion, they still had friends at Headquarters who were following their every movement. To add zest to the congratulations, someone had had the forethought to include in the supplies three big birthday cakes. Have birthday cakes ever made so strange a landing?

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But that was not all. There was yet another message. It announced that the Royal Netherlands Order of the Bronze Cross for faithful service had been awarded to Jean Victor de Bruijn, Rudy Gout, and Johannis Latumakulita. De Bruijn was a happy man that day. He was human enough to be pleased at the recognition he had received. He was glad too that Gout had been remembered, but de Bruijn himself had recommended that Latumakulita should receive some decoration. And now Her Majesty had accepted his suggestion, and conferred the Royal Order upon the Amboinese boy who, to use de Bruijn's own words, was "the best of all the party."

Overweel was still at Oeitapa. He reported that the village of Bilorai had been burned. There was also news from him that two Indonesians and five Papuans who had been out on a patrol had attacked a Japanese party at Hoemoelai, one day east of Bilorai. The Japanese, they said, were sleeping on the ground, with only their ground-sheets, when they crept in, threw some hand grenades, and emptied their tommy-guns at them. About fifteen Japanese were reported to have been killed. Overweel did not get the details of this until later. The first news he had that the Japanese were so close was when they were only about one hour from Oeitapa. Hurriedly he destroyed the base and retired to Olegaloek. It was never discovered if this report was true, because Overweel was working under the disadvantage of not being fully experienced in interrogating Papuans.

In the hasty destruction of Oeitapa the radio operator Brink had been badly burned. Gout too at this time was very ill. He had developed a high fever. The attack lasted about a fortnight, and was not alleviated by large doses of quinine. Both radio operators were now out of action. Brink had to be carried, and Gout was too sick to be moved. During this period de Bruijn had to take over the entire radio traffic. Then some of the boys got sick, and developed swollen

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faces. De Bruijn never knew what the complaint was. It disappeared after a few days, and probably was due to excessive heat. The mountain people had been accustomed all their lives to a cold climate. Reports had reached de Bruijn that some of the soldiers on the coast had suffered from the same complaint.

Having established the second bivouac at Schoutenkamp, de Bruijn now moved farther north to Canoe Bivak. A rest was due to them, and they stayed there for some time. Mitchell planes came over and replenished the camp's supplies. There was ten days' hunting of crown pigeons and cassowari, and good fishing too. Wild life was plentiful again. Often they started wild pigs by the river-banks. The crown pigeon (*goura coronata*) was frequently seen, and birds of paradise were numerous.

Each day they were greatly encouraged as they saw Lightning long-range fighters flying across from Merauke to raid Manokwari in the north. And at last the canoes were ready. There were enough to evacuate the whole party—forty-three men in all. The "drops" at Canoe Bivak also had included two full-sized rubber canoes and an outboard motor. The former might have been useful, but the outboard motor could never be used, because by the time the need arose the Japanese were too close and would have heard the noise of the engine. Eventually it was destroyed.

For two long weeks they had had no communication with Overweel. Brink was too ill to work the radio and Overweel didn't know how. In addition to all his other worries, de Bruijn bore the anxiety of not knowing what had happened at Olegaloek and on the Oeitapa trail. On top of this came more disquieting news. Fliers from supply-dropping planes one day dropped a message to say that retreating Japanese had been seen at Sago Bivak, to the north of Hagers Lake. It began to look as if de Bruijn and his party would be cut off on both sides. Another report said that more and more

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Japanese were moving in from the north. Canoes and rafts had been observed on the rivers, and many clusters of new huts had appeared. The Japanese, slowly moving south from Demba River, were retreating from the Americans. De Bruijn did not know this at the time, but it appeared obvious that unless chance took a hand, they would soon meet. He had to make a decision.

The only other possible way out was to go back to Olega-loek and then try to walk over and survive the great expanses of the Baliem valleys. It would mean a journey of many weeks through uninhabited lands or territories of unknown and probably unfriendly people: a small body of men with inadequate supplies, and two sick men to be carried. It would have meant literally walking through the valley of the shadow of death, fearing every evil.

While he was considering this, letters from van Eechoud and van der Veur, the N.E.F.I.S. officer at Merauke, were dropped, saying it would be suicidal to go to Hagers Lake. And then another letter came, and another, each telling of the danger that lay ahead. Reports from Hollandia and Merauke said the same thing. They did not know, of course, that the party was handicapped by having two sick men on their hands. Only de Bruijn could make the decision.

No! the Baliem way was impossible. They had to take the chance of getting through to Hagers Lake, and it would be safer for them all to be together. He sent word to Overweel to bring his own men to Canoe Bivak as quickly as possible. He would wait there until they came.

On the 29th June, 1944, Overweel and his party came into Canoe Bivak. Whatever happened, now at least they were all together. It was a gallant, if strangely assorted, company—de Bruijn, Overweel, Gout, Brink, Berger, Latumakulita, Joseph the former *Bestuursassistent*, Tumahu the carpenter, Nurwe the former houseboy, Boo the ex-convict, Domingoes the clown, Honggoljan, Kaboeroean, and so on. Forty-

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three in all—and Dodi. In those days de Bruijn needed all their support, and he did not have to ask it of one. He had guided them through difficult dark days. The mountain people had left their homes and followed him through three long years. He had been their friend and counsellor, had tended their wounds and shared their sorrows, as they had shared his rejoicings. He had promised he would not desert them: on that point he had argued with his Government and won. They were with him to a man. They knew, as he knew, that he had one remaining task—to lead them safely to the end of the journey, or if need be to die with them.

*The last trek—American air support—They come to Hagers Lake—"Oaktree" is no more.*

BEFORE THEY began their last trek, all the big canoes were destroyed. The whole party could not have moved down the river without being seen. Sitting in the middle of a stream 200 feet wide would have provided an irresistible target.

They made their first reconnaissance trip along the eastern bank, not being too secretive about it. They even did some shooting to let the Japanese know they were there. Then they returned to the site of their camp, crossed the river, and moved silently up the western bank in the direction of Hagers Lake.

At various points they took the precaution of making food dumps in case they had to make a hasty retreat.

After a few days' travelling, a patrol crossed the river and made another reconnaissance tour. They reported a strange discovery. They had come upon a Dutch flag planted close to the eastern bank, but no Japanese were seen. They assumed it was put there as a trap, and conviction was given to their assumption when they later made another investigation of the spot. The flag had been removed! The incident certainly suggested that the Japanese were in the vicinity and were only waiting for them to come down the river. In the light of this discovery it became even more necessary to move as silently as possible, and de Bruijn gave orders that there was to be no more shooting. But a few days later he was disturbed by hearing a shot, and shortly after one of the

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bodyguard came running up to rejoin the party. He was very sorry, the man said, but he had seen a ghost, a great hairy, wild-looking ghost. The apparition, however, turned out to be one of the big woolly-haired river Papuans. It was enough to frighten any small mountain man who had never seen the like. In his terror he fired a shot and then ran for his life.

Gradually, day by day, they went forward over the low, rolling, grassy country, through malarial swamps and the uninhabited barren land. There were no trails and no villages, for the people in this region are a nomadic race, and live and move only in their canoes on the great river.

Somewhere to the north was Hagers Lake. No one knew much about it. It was not known at all until November 1943, when the air pilot, Lieut. Hagers, discovered it while flying over with van Eechoud to make photostrips. No land party had been there. Le Roux in 1926, and van Eechoud in 1937, had both bypassed it. Strangely enough this goal to which the party was making as their sole hope of evacuation was only known by photostrips. The knowledge made their journey all the more hazardous and did little to alleviate their anxiety. If Hagers Lake should prove to be occupied by the Japanese, the Catalinas would be unable to land there. Again de Bruijn thought of the retreat through the Baliem valleys. But now even that would be cut off. The Japanese would already be at Olegaloek.

Small comfort was to be had from the messages dropped from the planes passing to and fro. None of them was assuring. Mostly they reported that more and more Japanese were moving down from the north. Many had been seen in the settlements at Sagobivak, quite close to Hagers Lake.

Van Eechoud came to the rescue. Knowing that the party was moving up from the south, he asked the 5th U.S. Air Force to strafe the area ahead. A successful raid was made. It helped a lot, because it gave the Japanese the impression that the party was stronger than it actually was and now had



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air cover. The message sent to de Bruijn from the Commander of the 5th U.S. Air Force at Hollandia gave them great heart. It read:

"Shot away to-day Oaktree area all superfluous canoes, rafts, and houses."

Each day as the party slowly moved forward, small reconnaissance patrols were made. After having come so far, they dare not risk an ambush. Overweel personally led some of these, but in each instance the same report came in. No footprints had been seen.

One day, as the party drew nearer to the lake, they were attacked by about seventy Papuans, but they soon drove them off and no casualties were sustained.

The entries in de Bruijn's diary at this period are much the same. "Day by day, slowly and silently moving towards Hagers Lake." "Patrols." "Still moving north." "More patrols." "Reports of bombing about the lake area." "Still moving forward." He makes no mention here of the country or the trials of the long trek. He was too tired and too anxious to dwell upon that. There was still the same jungle, thick jungle, over almost flat stretches, swamps by the river-bank, mosquitoes, leeches, heat, and sweat. From all his party there was no murmur of complaint. Resolutely they moved forward as one man. Already they had been a month on the trail.

Now the nature of the terrain changed. There were numerous small hills. Often it was difficult to march by the river-banks, and they had to take a trail over these risings. To make it more difficult, many tributaries flowed into the big river, small creeks, but too deep to wade. These inevitably caused delays. Sometimes they would cut a tree to form a bridge across, but more often than not the angle of its fall would cause it to lie short of the far bank. Usually they would have to retire inland, following the creek towards its



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source until they found a place where it was fordable. Even in this country, and in spite of their hardships, they were impressed by its beauty. They were nearer their goal and in better heart. There were some lovely spots. At one tributary, the Bigaboe, the water was clean and fresh and the area free from mosquitoes. It was such an idyllic spot that one of the police boys said to de Bruijn:

"I would like to stay here if food was available," and they all agreed with him.

They camped there, and de Bruijn, with one of the boys, took a rubber boat and went along the stream for a few miles. It was very quiet, with a gentle downstream current; a lovely idyll, such as one sees sometimes in a moving picture.

At last they came to a flat swampy area, and they knew that they were approaching the lake. Their journey was nearly ended.

They saw the Mitchell planes flying over, and heard the bombs exploding on Japanese positions in the distant timbered country. They knew now that on this last stage they had fighter air protection. And so, passing through the swamps, and a plague of myriads of mosquitoes that nearly drove them mad, they came to Hagers Lake.

A reconnaissance party took rafts out to the middle of the lake and set out the recognized signal—a flag and two disks—signifying that they had arrived and all was well.

At 8.30 in the morning of the 26th July, 1944, two Catalinas came down and settled on the water. But there was yet much to be done. The party was too numerous to allow room or weight for any equipment. Guns, ammunition, supplies—practically everything they had—were dumped. Only the radios could be taken.

One of the party had to be left behind—one who for ten months had been de Bruijn's daily companion, and had been at his side all along the trail. There were a few poignant

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words of farewell. A shot rang out. Dodi had entered whatever paradise there may be for faithful dogs.

In their little collapsible canoes the men left the shore in small numbers and boarded the waiting planes, stowing themselves in as best they could, until the last was on board. At 10.30 a.m. the planes were in the air.

"Oaktree" was no more.

De Bruijn looked out at the panorama spread before him. It was a grand and impressive sight. But it was towards the mountains he turned. In the distance he saw the rugged tops of the central ranges in whose valleys he had had his home for five and a half years. The jungle-covered slopes were hazy in the morning mist. Caps of cloud lay along the ridges, enveloping secrets of the ages. He alone, of all white men, shared them. But for him the mountains held more than secrets.

At that moment his eyes were seeing far beyond the range of his actual vision. They were looking inward to a living memory in the depths of his mind and heart. He saw there a little company of gallant men. In their midst, tall and dignified, stood Soalekigi, at his side that lovable rascal Weakebo, supported by his two sons. And there was Metakipame and Mundigibuwi, Kigimoajakigi and Korobia, Moegoehane and Jemaijawi.

Soalekigi's lips moved: "*Memoeroe*," he whispered.

Stretching far beyond the little group, de Bruijn saw a great horde of mountain men and women, and their little children with whom he had played, a line reaching from Lake Paniai far along the ranges to the Baliem valley. To fifty thousand of them he murmured:

"*Alegamè! Alegamè! Friend! Friend!*"







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